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**UTTERANCE AND AUTHORSHIP IN DIALOGIC ART:
or An Account of a Barcamp in Response to the Question,
'What is Dialogic Art?'**

MARSHA BRADFELD

ABSTRACT

The written aspect of this practice-based thesis ‘collates’ a one-day event exploring the question, ‘What is dialogic art?’ into a textual account. The practical aspect threads through this account, with reference to its dissemination elsewhere made frequently.

The event ‘documented’ here is a ‘barcamp’, a kind of ‘unconference’ that combines presentations with responsive discussion. This barcamp brings together practitioners of art, activism, education, philosophy, sociology, sociolinguistics, literary theory and criticism, and others to explore dialogic art through a dialogue that moves amongst their respective points of view.

The barcamp’s collation tracks the contributors’ discursive struggle to co-author dialogic art as a dialogue-based approach to contemporary art practice. ‘The dialogic’ that qualifies this art accretes through the barcamp as an artistic disposition preoccupied with the constitutive agency of dialogue, understood here in an expanded sense. This disposition explores the myriad relations that preoccupy authorship *qua* authorship. These include the material and conceptual thresholds organising creative agents and their cultural production: participation and collaboration, process and outcome, the author and the authored.

The epistemological foundation of this barcamp can be defined as dialogic because it understands knowledge as arising from social relations and enacted through intersubjective exchange. Similarly, the ontological basis for this project issues from a post-structuralist sense of subjectivity as simultaneously dispersed and multiple, distributed amongst authors. These philosophical perspectives underpin the theory of subjectivity evolved through dialogic art. This theory recommends the art’s authors as ‘responsive subjects’—artist-agents who are themselves reciprocally authored through their artistic practice. This reciprocal authorship explodes the twin myths of the independent artist-author and the discrete artwork without abandoning the facticity of their historical existence. Always contingent, dialogic artworks and their artist-agents are presented in this project as polyphonic portraits of heterogeneous becoming achieved through dialogic exchange.

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COLLATOR’S NOTES

Barcamps are a type of unconference that combines dynamic discussion with prepared contributions, such as demonstrations, presentations and short workshops. Barcamps are often documented impressionistically, coming together after the fact as fragments in a range of media. Tweets are favoured over transcripts and snapshots over video. The dynamic nature of this mode of assembly and its forms of address makes it resistant to easy representation. It is not uncommon to hear ‘barcampers’ say that, when it comes to this kind of experience, ‘You really had to be there to understand’. And, for sure, the vast majority of events like the one pictured in this thesis do resist capture. The general recollections, occasional-but-sharp impressions and embodied experience distributed amongst all those involved remains largely ‘off the page’ of documentary accounts.

Nevertheless, researching dialogic art through a barcamp seemed apt, with the interplay of voices and perspectives distinguishing this form as explicitly dialogic. Exploring the question, ‘What is dialogic art?’, this barcamp aims to enact what it seeks to explore with a homologous coupling of content and form across the transcript and the other aspects composing the barcamp’s collation.

I took up the challenge of collating this barcamp as an enthusiastic ‘barcamper’, but a novice in authoring such a comprehensive account. I have tried, wherever possible, to present this event in fidelity with the barcamp’s form, its organizational protocols and discursive tendencies, including wide-ranging conversations and use of props, such as PowerPoint slides. Yet, when it comes to the transcription proper, several considerations are worthy of mention. At times, the contributors’ dialogue becomes heated, with them speaking over each other. To maintain the flow of discussion on the printed page, editing was required. Choosing which interjections to include and exclude was by no means easy. And I would like to thank my supervisors, Neil Cummings, Stephen Scrivener and Mary Anne Francis for their editorial suggestions. With their encouragement, I approached collating this barcamp as something akin to a production. Honouring the contributors’ respective perspectives, embodied in their contributions, on the one hand, I have sought to make their discursive exchange accessible and significant to those encountering the barcamp ‘after-the-fact’ on the other. For sure, this balance proved challenging to strike, with the perceived needs of one constituency sometimes taking priority over the other.

There was also the contributors’ nonverbal communication to consider: their sighs, coughs, guffaws and all the rest. How to include or exclude these utterances? After several experiments, I settled on a sparse approach to avoid cluttering the transcript. Only nonverbal utterances or ambient noises that notably impact the discussion are included, as in the case of the barcamp clapping after the contributions, transitioning from one to the next. Another consideration was how to reference sources in the contributions and discussion. Deciding these worked best as endnotes, I have sometimes included direct quotations here of ones paraphrased in the contributors’ dialogic exchange. From time to time, it seemed necessary to expand some of the contributors’ ideas expressed in passing. In doing so, I aim to clarify lines of thought or draw out their significance. I have indicated these supplementary notes with an * to differentiate them from the others. Finally, the ‘documentary’ photographs, the presentation slides, select tweets and handouts are all integrated into the main body of the text. Other materials distributed in the barcamp are included as appendices at the end.

What is dialogic art?

A karmacamp exploring this emerging form of contemporary art practice. This user-generated experience aims to foster understanding of dialogic art through a one-day 'unconference'. Focused presentations of five to forty minutes (accompanied by films, handouts or other forms of creative expression) will be made by karmacamp contributors to open up dialogic exchange. Enthusiasm will be valued as much as expertise, art will be embraced in an expanded sense and the clash between practice/theory will be interrogated. This event welcomes practitioners from diverse fields to share their sensibilities by smoothing up their methods and learning from each other. There is no way to anticipate what knowledge will be co-produced.

Everyone is welcome and contributes.



What is dialogic art?
11th June, 2012: 9:00 - 7:00
 316 - 318 Bethnal Green Road
 E2 0AG London

whatdialogicart@gmail.com for further info

This karmacamp will be of special interest to those working in forms of 'co-practice' (collaborative, cooperative, collectivity, co-operation, etc.) as artists, designers, academics, researchers and others.

This research through-practice will be documented and publicly disseminated. The outcomes of enquiries will inform the ongoing (Oliwia Bratfield and Allison Jarry's) collaborative art research.

With generous support from Chelsea College of Art and Design, University of the Arts London







09:03

WHAT IS DIALOGIC ART?		
8:30-10:00	MARSHA & ALLISON	WELCOME ADDRESS
10:00-10:40	CHARLIE CHURCH	THE DIALOGIC
10:40-11:20	K.K. LIN	DIALOGIC PERFORMANCE?
11:20-12:00	HELA SONE	WILL DOG BE WITH US?
12:00-12:40	BOBBI SPENCER	WILL DOG BE WITH US?
12:40-1:20	SHAWN DUNN	WILL DOG BE WITH US?
1:20-2:00	FRANK WHELAN	EFFECT
2:00-2:30	DAVID SOKOLBY	?
LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH
3:00-4:00	DAVID MURPHY	WILL DOG BE WITH US?
4:00-5:00	MARKE CITY	WILL DOG BE WITH US?
5:00-6:00	ALF WILSON	WILL DOG BE WITH US?
6:00-7:00	PAUL WILSON	WILL DOG BE WITH US?
7:00-8:00	PAUL WILSON	WILL DOG BE WITH US?
8:00-9:00	PAUL WILSON	WILL DOG BE WITH US?

Fig. 1.0



Duchamp's Sister

@CassyAppadurai

23m

The hashtag for this barcamp is #diacamp—please include this in your tweets so they all appear in the same stream.

Collapse

Reply

Delete

Favorite



Fig. 1.1

Marsha Bradfield:

It's recording?

Allison Jones:

The red light is on.

Marsha Bradfield:

Hello, everyone. If you could take your seats, we'll get started. My name is Marsha Bradfield and it's my very great pleasure to welcome you all with a few opening comments. Though to be honest, I'm sorry to be interrupting the discussion that was brewing over coffee on dialogue as labour. I'd like to keep this going, so feel free to interject.

Now, at the beginning of events like this one, there is usually a reminder to turn off your mobile phones. But instead I suggest you leave them on and I invite you to contribute to our Twitter feed. We'll see how well it works for sharing your thoughts and observations about our discussion as it unfolds. Think of this as 'live feedback'. Presenters may choose to respond to the tweets directly or not. Either way, the feed will be projected alongside our discussion. You can use your own handle or remain anonymous by posting as 'DialogicArt'; the info on how to do this is included in your barcamp pack. (See A.1)

Now, according to convention, a welcome address begins with a greeting, after which the host acknowledges notable guests. But as you're all notable and this is an intimate gathering, I'll ask you to *briefly* introduce yourselves at the end of this welcome. I'll say more about barcamps, which is the name of today's discursive format, a little later on. For now, let me acknowledge that, in keeping with barcamp practice, introductions are done quickly by stating

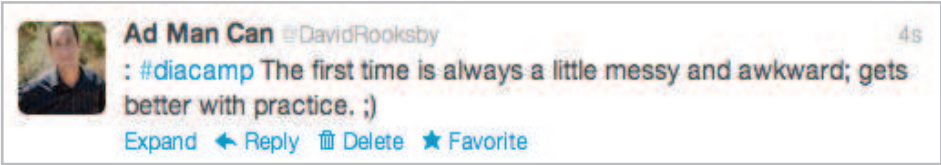


Fig. 1.2

your name, along with two or three keywords related to your contribution. In this way, we'll get a sense of the day's lineup. This is also indicated by the sticky-note schedule, which is another barcamp practice. (Fig. 1.0)

So, as you know from the barcamp announcement—and I'm referring here to the open call, which I've also included in your barcamp packs—we're here today to explore the question, 'What is dialogic art?'. I will, in due course, offer a response, but on the condition that it's *only* one response—a departure point for our discussion, something to kick against and evolve. And Allison and I have very good reason for prioritising this discussion of dialogic art. Now—

David Rooksby: Excuse me, Marsha, but Allison is—?

Marsha Bradfield: Well, as some of you know, I'm pursuing a collaborative, practice-based PhD with Allison Jones, but we're writing separate theses. Allison is a critic, curator and art historian and she is researching an evaluative framework for dialogic art.

Now, there is significant overlap in our practice-based projects but, as an artist, my research is preoccupied with *dialogic forms*—forms that are predisposed to representing a *range* of authorial relations. I came to the barcamp's own dialogic form through working with Critical Practice,¹ which is the group featured barcamping in my slides. (Figs. 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.6, 1.7, 1.9, 1.10, 1.11)

So Critical Practice is a research cluster supported by Chelsea College of Art and Design, where Allison and I are doing our PhDs. I've been a member of CP for more than five years now and—by organising, facilitating and contributing to the cluster's many barcamps—I've developed a deep appreciation for this dialogic form. Barcamps are good at bringing voices, knowledges, sensibilities and other dynamics into relation through combining prepared presentations with responsive discussion. In my experience, this dialogic form is especially well suited—tailor made, in fact—for co-producing knowledge and understanding through a kind of immersive experience. And I had this in mind for today's gathering: that by inhabiting the barcamp with our *bodies*, our *thinking*, our *attention*, our *enthusiasm* and our *expertise*, we might gain a richer sense of what distinguishes a dialogic form from other types.

Ella Stone: Other types? What other types might those be?

Marsha Bradfield: Well, think of academic conferences in comparison to barcamps, where experts *read* their papers *at* an audience.

Ella Stone: Is this not *still* a dialogic form? Because there is dialogue involved, *oui*? The papers *address* the audience? And what about the post-paper questions? They would be dialogic, would they not?

Shadworth Dyson: If I may come in on this, Marsha. Your question—forgive me, but you are—

Ella Stone: It's Ella. Ella Stone. *Et vous, monsieur*?



TheJargonBuster @TheJargonBuste1

#diacamp Acronym for dialogic art = DA

Collapse Reply Delete Favorite

24s




Assume the Position @EllaandBrian

#diacamp MB already has a sense of DA. Are we confirming or contesting it?

Expand

10m



Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai

David Rooksby (DR): We need to define 'dialogic' before we can discuss 'dialogic art'. #diacamp

Expand Reply Delete Favorite

2m




Ad Man Can @DavidRooksby

#diacamp LTI of BC presentations being provocations for discussion. So different from the standard [read: boring] conference format.

Expand Reply Delete Favorite

18s




TheJargonBuster @TheJargonBuste1

#diacamp 'LTI'? This is not a standard Twitter acronym or abbreviation.

Expand Reply Delete Favorite

10s




Ad Man Can @DavidRooksby

#diacamp LTI = 'Love the idea'.

Expand Reply Delete Favorite

8s



TheJargonBuster @TheJargonBuste1

#diacamp Great. But could you define nonstandard acronyms and abbreviations on first use in this stream, please?

Expand Reply Delete Favorite

9s



Ad Man Can @DavidRooksby

#diacamp :)

Expand Reply Delete Favorite

now

Shadworth Dyson:

Shadworth Dyson. Very pleased to make your acquaintance. Your question, Ella, is a sharp one in that it cuts into dialogic forms as constitutive of dialogic art. I shall take this up in my presentation later this morning, when I discuss how it is that some forms are *more* dialogic than others and consider what consequences this has for dialogic art.

David Rooksby:

More dialogic. I feel like I’ve stumbled into a conversation that’s already in full swing and everyone seems to know what ‘dialogic’ means except me. I’m not complaining. I just want to join the party.

Clark Chris:

Well then, you can count on *my* contribution—coming up next. I’ll take up ‘the dialogic’ in relation to dialogue, among other things.

Marsha Bradfield:

And hopefully we’ll surface some of the tacit understanding that our discussion is already taking for granted. It may be a useful foundation, but it will need to be unpacked.

David Rooksby:

The sooner you define ‘dialogic’ the better. I mean, we can’t very well talk about dialogic art without clear agreement about what ‘dialogic’ means.

Marsha Bradfield:


It’s a good comment because it’s a practical one. I’ve said the barcamp’s form differs from an academic conference. This is especially the case when pre-scripted papers marked by dialectical argumentation are the norm. By contrast, the *logic* of the barcamp as a *dialogic* form is more dynamic, responsive—*provocative*, even. Think of the barcamp presentations as *primers* for discussion, in contrast to self-contained arguments that are fully worked up and worked out.

Allison Jones:

It’s absolutely crucial to our research that we orient ourselves in this barcamp and come to terms with how, in particular, this dialogic form facilitates our interaction. With this in mind, a word or two about questions and comments.
I would like to remind you that questions that aim to *clarify* something and comments intent on *extending* our discussion’s remit will *propel* our dialogue. However, from time to time it will be necessary to defer their consideration, so that additional insights and information that are not directly relevant to the immediate presentation can be brought to bear. This is central to our research, which is, of course, our primary reason for being here today. So, for example, when Marsha or I—or another interlocutor, for that matter—flags a question for future consideration, it’s because discussing *all* the questions, comments and concerns raised in this welcome address goes beyond what we can hope to accomplish—at least, in *the immediate* contribution. But to be sure, David, defining ‘dialogic’ and ‘dialogue’ is vital if we are to evolve our understanding of dialogic art, and I look forward to hearing what Clark has to say about this.

Marsha Bradfield:


In this same spirit of deferral, I’ll resist saying more about dialogic forms and hold off discussing Critical Practice, as I know from a recent conversation with Phil that he’ll consider one of the cluster’s projects in his contribution this afternoon.
But I hope that, in light of what has been said so far about the *logic* of dialogic forms, you can see more clearly—or at least a *little* more clearly—



Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai2m

Phil Hind (PH): Dialogue about perspectival diversity—different points of view (POV). #diacamp


Expand



TheJargonBuster @TheJargonBuste1now

#diacamp PH: In sociology, 'actors' = someone/thing with volition.


Expand Reply Delete Favorite



What is dialogic art @DialogicArt17s

#diacamp We should start a list of questions raised in this BC to track areas of interest.


Expand Reply Delete Favorite



Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai3m

Will flag question list with MB and AJ. #diacamp


Expand



TheJargonBuster @TheJargonBuste1now

#diacamp John Johnson (JJ): More heads/perspectives aren't necessarily better than one


Expand Reply Delete Favorite



Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai55s

Ella Stone (ES): Our different POVs might feed into understanding(s) reached through dialogue.


Expand



Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai1m

A dialogic understanding of dialogic art? #diacamp

Expand Reply Delete Favorite



Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai

AJ: DA questions what dialogue is in cultural production (cult. pro.) and who it involves. #diacamp

Expand Reply Delete Favorite

Phil Hind:

Krista Wiseman:

Phil Hind:

David Rooksby:

Marsha Bradfield:

David Rooksby:

Marsha Bradfield:

David Rooksby:

Marsha Bradfield:

Allison Jones:

John Johnson:

Ella Stone:

Shadworth Dyson:

Marsha Bradfield:

Shadworth Dyson:

Allison Jones:

why your contributions, anchored in a range of distinct and specialised perspectives, are so key to evolving an understanding—or understandings—of dialogic art. We need your response—responses.

So you’ve smuggled in a definition of dialogue through the back door, Marsha! Granted, I’m listening with the ears of a sociologist, but I think you’ve said there is more to dialogue than interaction between human actors. Dialogue also describes the interplay of their different positions, their distinct points of view—their *perspectival diversity*.

Human actors? As in *theatre*? A dialogue in a play or film?

No, though it makes good sense that one would hear it that way. I’m using the term ‘actor’ here in a sociological sense, as opposed to a dramatic one, to describe someone or something with sufficient *volition* to *associate* and *dissociate* with *other* actors.²

So you’re saying that dialogue is more than just people talking.

Yes.

Dialogue is also about different points of view being in dialogue with each other.

In a manner of speaking, yes. The idea being that interlocutors tend to hold different perspectives, with these finding expression through their interaction. So—

But who or what is doing the interacting here? The points of view? The people? What? Or, I guess, who—whom—who? You know what I mean.

Well, *both* are interacting. Dialogue is a multiplex basis for dialogic art, which is why we need your help.

What Marsha is trying to say is that, by addressing the question, ‘What is dialogic art?’ from a range of perspectives, we aim to generate, for our research, a richer understanding or understandings of dialogic art composed of distinct points of view—including yours—than we could do on our own. So a stronger sense of dialogic art as both theory and practice.

Okay, so *more* is better? Look, not necessarily—not as far as I’m concerned.

Oui, mais is it an issue of more perspectives? Or is it closer to different and more nuanced perspectives? Perspectives that might feed into an understanding—or understandings, as you say of dialogic art—that we reach through dialogue.

Well, when you put it that way, there’s no pressure!

Actually, you’re quite right to flag this, Professor Dyson.

Do call me Shadworth.

As Marsha says, you’re right to flag this, Shadworth. There *is* pressure. Or more specifically, through our work together, Marsha and I perceive that evolving a theory and practice of dialogic art is *pressing*. And this perceived importance—this urgency—pertains to the constitutive role of dialogue in contemporary art practice. What are the so-called ‘dialogues’ that have assumed centre stage in cultural production, and which are often celebrated as liberating and progressive? And how do they compose cultural forms,



Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai

Clark Chris (CC): Dialogue as 'arts policy' —a way to make contemporary art (con. art) more accountable. #diacamp

Expand ↩ Reply 🗑 Delete ★ Favorite

6s



TheJargonBuster @TheJargonBustel

#diacamp The dematerialization of the art object refers to the object aspect of an artwork being subordinated to an idea.

Expand

5s




TheJargonBuster @TheJargonBustel

See Lucy Lippard's Six Years.

Expand ↩ Reply 🗑 Delete ★ Favorite

15s



Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai

CC: Dialogue as art—the last frontier of dematerialization of the art object; anticipates the disappearance of art (?)#diacamp

Expand ↩ Reply 🗑 Delete ★ Favorite

18s



Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai

#diacamp Maeve Cutty (MC): Could DA offer a 'theory of the work' that explores its own complexity and contingency (?)

Expand ↩ Reply 🗑 Delete ★ Favorite

5s

including dialogue-based art practice? What are their methods and ambitions, their socio-political conditions? Who are their interlocutors?³ These are some of the questions behind the central one that brings us here today: ‘What is dialogic art?’

Cassy Appadurai:

Excuse me, Allison, but has dialogue really ‘assumed centre stage in cultural production’, to use your turn of phrase?

Clark Chris:

You want evidence? That wouldn’t be *my* question because, for *my sins*, I spend most of my time *in* dialogue. As I was saying to Phil over coffee, ‘dialogue’, in *my* experience, is a turnstile for funding bodies bound by well-intentioned but misguided policies that are hell bent on making art *accountable*.⁴ I’m a *jobbing* artist and, you know, it’s *all* about dialogues, because dialogues are the so-called *impact indicators*—like the *contact days* we’re expected to have, shaking hands and chatting with the public or, *worse* yet, doing *workshops*.⁵ It’s just *too* much, really. Anyone here a public programmer or arts policy person? Nope? None of you looks the type.

Ella Stone:

If it is curators you are looking for, Brian and I fit into that category.

Marsha Bradfield:

Allison and John do, too.

Krista Wiseman:

I also curate.

Marsha Bradfield:

At the risk of sounding glib, arts policy impacts us all.

Clark Chris:

Then you’ll know that all this dialogue *in* art, *around* art—as art—is really the *downside* of the dematerialization of the art object. Could be that dialogue is just too *familiar*—we do it all the time, it’s the stuff of *life*, really. For whatever reason, it’s easily *instrumentalised* by the powers that be. I mean, *conceptualism* happened nearly half a century ago. And look at art now! Today, it’s a case of ‘dialogue, dialogue everywhere and not a drop of art to drink’.

John Johnson:

Okay, you’re saying there’s *not enough art* in the world? Not enough objects? Is that what you mean? But the majority of museum collections are in storage! I once heard that, in the case of Tate, it’s like 70%.⁶ Listen, dialogue as sheer intersubjective exchange could be a sustainable development in art, which, as we all know, is a field given to fetishising *material* culture.

Phil Hind:

‘Sheer intersubjective exchange?’ I’m not sure what’s more question-begging: the ‘sheer’ part of this suggestion or what you mean by ‘intersubjective exchange’. I have some reservations—

Clark Chris:

And what about ‘sustainability’? My *own* sustainability? I’m so busy *dialoguing* with the public and with art administrators that there’s *very* little time or energy to have a decent conversation with my *own* art. That’s why I’m here today—to figure out ways to do a better job of managing and extracting value from all the *dialogues* that cinch together my art practice.

Maeve Cutty:

Well, ah what you’re saying sounds a lot like ‘a theory of the work’,⁷ as Michel Foucault puts it. He gives the example of Nietzsche’s laundry list. Is this a work or isn’t it? How do we take up, ah, the empirical task of editing and grouping—evaluating—cultural production *without* a theory of the work?⁸ Simply put, this remains very much up for grabs. There’s a real need for

25




KK Lin @KKLin1

#diacamp Good point re DA being a 'theory of artistic practice' in contrast to 'of the work' (Foucault).

Expand Reply Delete Favorite

now



Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai

#diacamp Distinction between 'dialogues' in the artwork and 'other dialogues' around or beyond. Boundary between not always clear.

Expand Reply Delete Favorite

now



Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai

#diacamp Should we include 'other dialogues' in DA? Emails, phone calls, meetings, etc.? What's gained from doing so?

Expand Reply Delete Favorite

now



Assume the Position @EllaandBrian

1/3 #diacamp 30/70 split, it recalls Bataille's theory of general economy as alt. to restrictive, which is norm (scarcity thinking).

Expand Reply Delete Favorite

7s




Assume the Position @EllaandBrian

#diacamp Gen eco considers range of resource flows--excess, energy, wast. What we can't recuperate controls us, eg war.

Expand

10m



Assume the Position @EllaandBrian

#diacamp See 'The Accursed Share'.

Expand

10m



Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai

AJ: Aims to distinguish between DA and other kinds of dialogue-based contemporary art (DBAP). #diacamp

Expand Reply Delete Favorite

now

theories concerned with organising cultural production into multifarious outcomes that critically consider their own complexity and contingency, as such.

Clark Chris: A theory of the work as in an *artwork*? How about a theory of *artistic practice* that both *includes* and goes *beyond* the artwork? Yes, it's a good point, because it gets at all the *work* that's carried out to bring an *artwork* into *being*—all the *labour* that makes art *happen*.

Maeve Cutty: But, if I may come in on this, there's something else. It goes back to David's questions about how we're defining 'dialogic' here. When it comes to the practice of dialogic art, I think we need to ask what counts as a dialogue, and why certain dialogues count as dialogic art and not others, right?

Clark Chris: There is also the question of how to include these *other* dialogues in dialogic works of art, as well as what we *gain* from doing so.

Cassy Appadurai: Could you clarify what you mean by 'other' dialogues?

Clark Chris: You know—all the *planning*, the *preparation*, the *emails*, the *phone* calls, the *meetings* and the *decision-making*. They *all* tend to be *othered*—to be *disappeared*, actually—in the artwork as an *outcome*.

Marsha Bradfield: But do we want to include them, and what benefit results from doing so?

Maeve Cutty: That's a good point, Marsha. I see yours and raise it with another one: that we might also think about these other dialogues as Foucault might have, by which I mean we would encompass all the discursive *modes*—the valorisation, attribution, circulation and appropriation—that actually go into creating works of art and other forms of cultural production, right?⁹

Clark Chris: Yes, those *too*. It's like what you were saying about storage, John. When it comes to art practice, what gets recognised as 'artworks' is only ever a *fraction* of what's involved, what's been *produced*—the *energy* that's been expended. Yeah, a 30/70 split sounds about right, actually.

KK Lin: But, if I can interject, I'm, um, thinking that it's not just about making all this labour available in the case of dialogic art. It's about making it *accessible* in a *meaningful* way, isn't it? I think this comes onto questions of documentation and dissemination, doesn't it? Under the broader umbrella of *representation*?

Marsha Bradfield: Yes. And this distinction between making these dialogues—this labour—*accessible* in contrast to merely available is something we should hold onto, 27
KK. The same goes for your concerns about *bounding* dialogic artworks, Clark and Maeve.

Allison Jones: Of course, this discussion of differentiation calls to mind another distinction that's important to our research. What makes *dialogic* art different from other dialogue-based practices of contemporary art?

Clark Chris: Well, I'm repeating myself, but *I* think this art could expand our sense of art practice to *include* and go *beyond* the artwork through the simple act of *accounting* for all the *work* that goes into it—a theory of art practice based on dialogue as *labour*, really. You look surprised, Marsha.



Fig. 1.3

Marsha Bradfield: Not at all, and I’m fascinated by your labour-based concern, as this isn’t something that Allison and I have really explored in our preliminary research. But by now it should be clear that we organised today’s event as a barcamp to bring a *range* of perspectives to bear on dialogic art, so you’re right on task with your particular interest, Clark.

David Rooksby: Look, I really don’t mean to be difficult, but an artwork has to have limits—it has to have some kind of shape or form, and an artistic one to boot. Otherwise, it’s just all *work* and no *art*.

Phil Hind: So on one hand there’s growing consensus here that dialogic art could expand our established notions of ‘the artwork’, and I don’t disagree. Yet, on the other hand, David’s point is well taken, as expansion introduces a risk of infinite regress, if you see what I mean. So the question begged is, ‘What determines the boundaries of a dialogic work of art?’ That’s something I’d like to know.

Allison Jones: I have another caution to add. Clark’s comments pertain to the broader context of dialogic art and how dialogue is ‘impacting’ contemporary art more generally, and I’ll place that word in air quotes for your sake, Clark. However, audit culture is only *one instance* of this impact.

Clark Chris: Your point being?

Allison Jones: That listening to the way you’re describing dialogue seems to indicate a number of presuppositions that have the potential to take on a prescriptive hue. For example, you appear to be conflating the rise of dialogue, or its increased visibility in contemporary art, with *audit culture*. But it behooves us not to invest dialogue with too much *particular* significance too soon, making it value-laden so it’s already encumbered by ideological baggage.¹⁰

Clark Chris: Who said *anything* about dialogue being *value-laden*? All I said is that I’ve come to accept that much of *my* art practice is spent *in* dialogue and, as this seems unlikely to change, I’m looking for ways to make the most of it, really. You know, twenty years ago I spent a lot of time building stretchers, pulling canvas and spreading gesso. Today, I *dialogue*.

Marsha Bradfield: Hold on to that thought, Clark, as I move this welcome address in a slightly different direction. I hope we can sustain this level of discussion. But Allison and I would also like to use this contribution to introduce several outcomes of our preliminary research on dialogic art that might inform today’s exchange. So perhaps a little sign posting would help to anticipate what we aim to cover in the next half hour, as well as focus our broader discussion.

I want to say something about the influence of popular culture on dialogic art, after which Allison will engage it from the angle of dialogue-based contemporary art practice. She’ll also take stock of some of the *rationales* for our research and then I’ll offer a few more words about the barcamp format. After this, we’ll introduce ourselves and then crack on with the other contributions.



Fig. 1.4

Allison Jones:

Clark Chris:

Marsha Bradfield:

Alright, so what influence might popular culture have on dialogic art, with this art understood in a very general sense as a dialogue-based approach to contemporary art practice? Allison is going to supplement the broad strokes of my thinking by tweeting evidence to— Support some of Marsha’s generalisations. We’ve never co-delivered in this fashion before. It’s an experiment; bear with us.

A tag team, a division of labour—what have I been *telling* you? To consider the influence of popular culture on dialogic art, I want to connect this to our barcamp’s dialogic form. Both the discursive format and the Twitter feed (Fig. 1.3) can be described as social media, come under the banner of Web 2.0. We might think of the barcamp as a kind of analogue version of a chat-room exchange or a Skype interface. Added to this, the Twitter feed will supplement our discussion with citizen journalism. We have microbloggers hard at work, demonstrating the potential of this technology by *annotating* our barcamp with a layer of meta-discussion—*live*.

All this points to what I would like to dub ‘the dialogic turn’ in culture at large. But I googled it—someone else has already coined this expression, and it resonates with quite specific significance. Of course, in and of itself, dialogue through forms like peer-to-peer exchange is nothing new. My cattle-ranching grandfather got his barns built on the prairies of Alberta, Canada by helping other cattle ranchers to build theirs, or by trading equivalent skills. And this peer-to-peer exchange is also how we’re going to expand our sense of dialogic art through this barcamp as a multi-threaded platform—by drawing on each other’s expertise and enthusiasm through our discussions, both on and offline.

So when it comes to dialogue being *new*, it’s less a question of *what* than *how*. Yes, dialogue has been technologically mobilised and intensified, with the Internet resulting in mass connectivity. And, yes, this technology has encouraged patterns of use, with people dialoguing through high-profile platforms like Facebook and YouTube and also emerging ones, such as N.E.W.S. and aaaaarg.org (Fig. 1.4), which are becoming key organs for a range of cultural production. It’s also true that many of us spend a good part of our lives online, or with these Internet platforms running in the background, on the fringes of our attention. All this is to acknowledge that, as an approach to contemporary art practice concerned with intersubjective exchange, dialogic art is developing both *in response to* as well as *through* social media, peer-to-peer networking and other forms of enhanced connectivity. Dialogic art, in our working understanding, explores intersubjective exchange as people interact with objects, networks, information and/or each other to produce dialogic works of art.

David Rooksby:

Hang on. Earlier we talked about dialogue as ‘an exchange between people and/or distinct perspectives’. You’ve also said that you’ve been thinking about dialogic art as a particular *approach* to dialogue-based practice in contemporary art. And *now* you’ve said that it explores ‘intersubjective



Fig. 1.5

exchange as people interact with objects, networks, information and/or each other to produce dialogic works of art'. It seems like you already *know* what dialogue is and what dialogic art is. So I'm not sure what the pressing need is for a barcamp.

John Johnson: Okay, but to me the point is—look, can you name an artwork or art practice that's *not* produced as people interact with objects, networks, information and/or each other?

Ella Stone: *Oui, mais*, is it not a question of *emphasis*? Is dialogic art not especially concerned with the *intersubjectivity* arising from this interaction—this exchange?

John Johnson: Okay, but, look, even then, I would argue that all art is 'especially concerned with intersubjectivity'. I mean, isn't this what's produced through the triple-A relation of artist-artwork-audience? The point is, artworks *are* interfaces for intersubjective encounter; they put subjects *in relation*—necessarily.

Ella Stone: Well, no, not necessarily. Or, at least, I'm not sure. I suppose it depends on how Marsha and Allison are defining intersubjective exchange—intersubjectivity—does it not?

Allison Jones: Suffice to say, for the moment, that we understand this as arising through the interaction or exchange between or among sentient subjects—*people*, really. But our research will require that we elaborate this in due course.

Ella Stone: Allison, I think perhaps you have found a useful placeholder. But could we get back to popular culture? Does anyone else find that what Marsha has said about the influence of this on dialogic art sounds awfully familiar? Does not Nicolas Bourriaud also promote intersubjective exchange as a central aspect of relational art in his influential work, *Relational Aesthetics*?¹¹ More specifically, does not Bourriaud say that, relational art, with its meetings, openings and services, can be tied back to socio-technological developments? In fact, he speaks about this art form—a particular kind of art practice that emerged in the 1990s—responding to, for instance, the loosening of social relations by the alienating effects of, for example, TV—television—as a one-way broadcast system.¹² Have you any thoughts on this?

Marsha Bradfield: Well, Ella, my PhD research actually evolved from a *critique* of relational aesthetics. I have a slide here somewhere. Just let me find it.

Allison Jones: Bear with us. The upside to making a discussion-based barcamp contribution is that it's dynamic. The downside is that one's linearly organised slide presentation labours to keep pace, and PowerPoint isn't very nimble.

Marsha Bradfield: Thanks, Allison. So what you're looking at here is a very old document (Fig. 1.5). As you can see, it dates back to April 2007, before Allison and I became co-researchers. The RF3 is the University of the Arts London's proposal for PhD registration. It sketches the aims and objectives for the research and indicates the context of its exploration. It's really the second paragraph that I think is relevant here, as it speaks about the formative relationship between relational art, by which I mean relational aesthetics, and my research on dialogic art. And so here I wrote:



Fig. 1.6

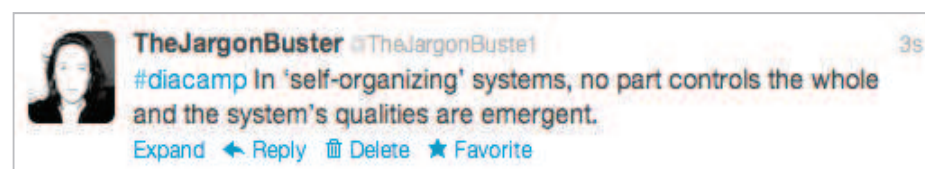
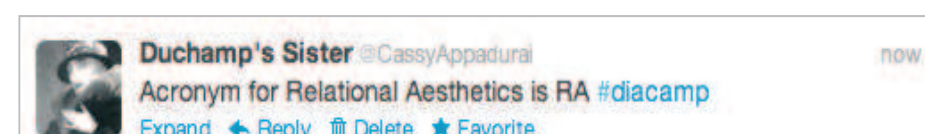


Fig. 1.7

My research will address a problem that I see characterising participatory art in general and relational aesthetics in particular: Participation is typically understood as limited to making in the art. It does not extend to the making of the art. In Rikrit Tiravanija's *Untitled (Tomorrow is Another Day)* (1996), for example, participants were invited to 'make the work' by cooking, eating and so on. They were not, however, encouraged to interact with the artwork's form—to change its structure. Participation was thus limited to making Tiravanija's work in accordance with the parameters determined by the artist in advance.¹³ (Fig.1.5)

And I remain committed—

Allison Jones:

We are committed—and if I may say so, Marsha, would this be a good place for me to take over? Many thanks. So we are committed to elaborating dialogic art as closer to a self-organising system than one directed by Marsha as the artist or me as the critic, curator or art historian. However, in terms of pre-existing models, we have come to understand dialogic art as having a *stronger* affinity with the dialogue-based art practice of dialogical art than with relational art, underpinned by Bourriaud's relational aesthetics, *per se*.

Now, American art historian Grant Kester has been promoting 'dialogical art' since before the millennium and theorising it through what he calls 'dialogical aesthetics'. The most comprehensive expression of this to date comes together in his important book, *Conversation Pieces: Community and Communication in Modern Art*. Here, Kester considers the project-based practices of artists Lucy Orta, Suzanne Lacy, Stephen Willats, the Artist Placement Group and others. And Kester's preoccupation with the dialogues composing their practices has been central to evidencing the ways in which dialogue is assuming 'centre stage', as I made the point earlier, in contemporary art. Kester's argument is built on the premise that:

While it is common for a work of art to provoke dialogue among viewers, this typically occurs in response to a finished object. In [dialogical] projects, on the other hand, conversation becomes an integral part of the work itself. It is reframed as an active, generative process that can help us speak and imagine beyond the limits of fixed identities, official discourse, and the perceived inevitably of partisan political conflict.¹⁴ (Fig. 1.6)

This premise not only locates dialogue *in* the artwork, it also describes dialogue as a productive process of intersubjective exchange *as* the artwork—as *art*. So when it comes to overlaps between 'dialogic' art and 'dialogical' art, two are especially noteworthy.

Firstly, they share an interest in the dialogues generated *in* the artworks and also *composing* them; and secondly, they aim to recognise the ways in which these dialogues *impact* each other to generative effect.¹⁵ Now, Kester, [and I should say he makes this comment with reference to *dialogical* art] Kester celebrates this as an 'open-ended process of dialogical engagement, which produces new and unanticipated forms of collaborative knowledge'.¹⁶

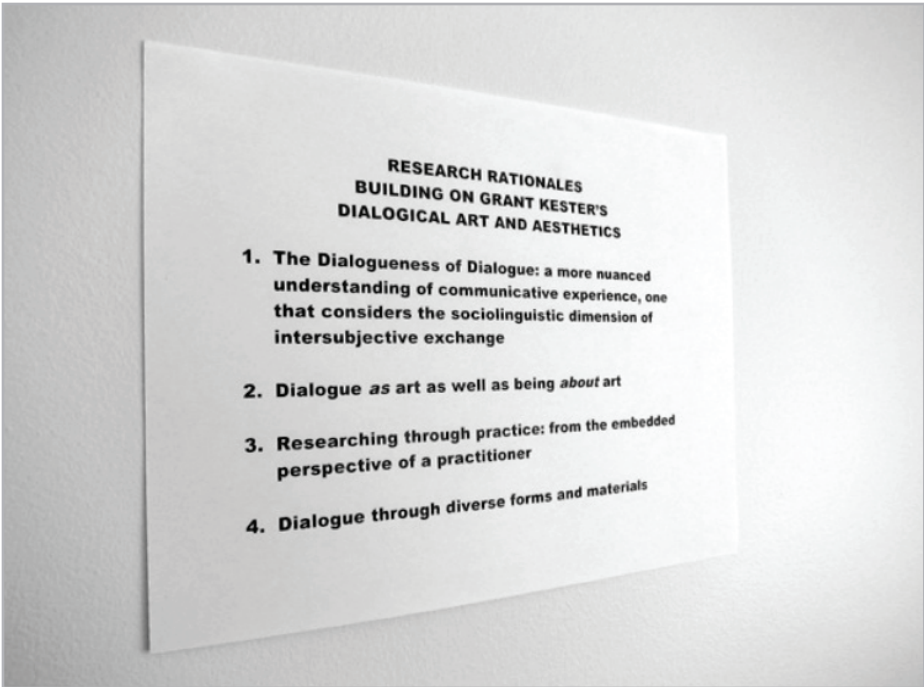


Fig. 1.8

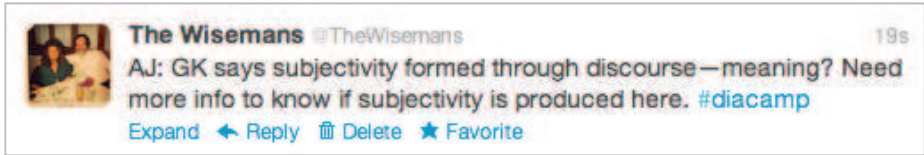


Fig. 1.9

(Fig. 1.7) This suggests that, in addition to these artworks being produced *through* literal dialogues, the plurality of perspectives that they embody then *synergise* (an awful but appropriate word) to create new forms of knowledge. I believe this is the *fourth* time the word ‘knowledge’ or one of its cognates has been mentioned today. That’s all very good, but what does Kester mean by the ‘collaborative knowledge’ produced in dialogical art?

Hillary Murphy:

Allison Jones:

Well, knowledge isn’t something that he explicitly considers in *Conversation Pieces* or ‘Dialogical Aesthetics: A Critical Framework for Dialogic Art’—beyond what I’ve already said.

Hillary Murphy:

But, you see, it’s difficult to claim that dialogical artworks generate ‘collaborative knowledge’ without offering at least *some* sense of what this knowledge *is*—how it might *differ* from other kinds or forms of knowledge and other knowledge practices, if you see what I mean. I think it’s best not to waylay our discussion by exploring this difference now—I assume it can wait until the after-lunch review. At that point, I hope to propose an understanding of the dialogic epistemology that might ground dialogic art, and I think we all might find that helpful.

Allison Jones:

I look forward to that, Hillary. I’m sure your contribution will be very useful to our research. Now, having observed Kester’s premise that dialogical artworks are composed of literal dialogues, and having also indicated this composition is prime to our working definition of dialogic art, I would like to note four limitations of Kester’s approach, and I believe these point to key rationales for Marsha’s and my research.

These rationales are more fine-grained than our overarching conviction that dialogue remains an under-theorised, yet nevertheless, vitally constitutive aspect of contemporary art in dialogue-based art practices and beyond. I believe Marsha has printed out these rationales and will hang them in plain view so we can keep them in mind over the day. Marsha? Yes, there is fine. Thank you. (Fig. 1.8)

Now, turning to the first rationale, Kester argues that *we need a more nuanced understanding of communicative experience*. He describes this as ‘one capable of differentiating between an abstract, objectifying mode of discourse that is insensitive to the specific identities of speaking subjects’.¹⁷ (Fig. 1.9) What this draws into view is Kester’s interest in the *identity formation* occurring through social and discursive interaction. While I don’t have time to discuss this in detail, the sociologists in the room may be especially interested to learn that Kester elaborates this with reference to Jürgen Habermas’s argument that discourse is not merely a tool for communicating pre-established content.¹⁸ Kester describes discourse as a *generative process*, with ‘subjectivity [being] formed through [it] and inter-subjective exchange itself’.¹⁹ (Fig. 1.10) Hence, in light of this declared interest, it is surprising that Kester does not substantively explore his concern with discourse and/as intersubjective exchange in his discussion of dialogical artworks or aesthetics. Kester *does* point to speech acts²⁰ as constitutive of

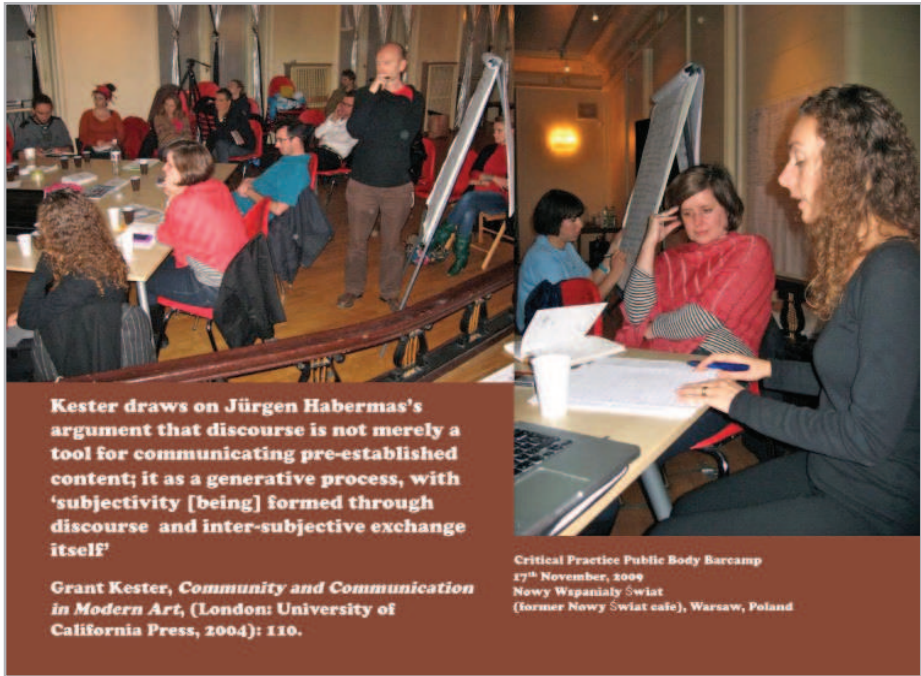


Fig. 1.10



this art. But, this indication aside, Kester does not pursue what Marsha and I have come to term the *dialogueness of dialogues* in our preliminary research. And by this we mean the *interplay* of dialogue’s social and material qualities that have made it such an *enduring* form of social interaction. In this respect, the limitations of Kester’s approach are broadly representative. There is still important creative and intellectual work to be done around many aspects of dialogue as social *and* artistic practice in contemporary art.

Shadworth Dyson: Well, one would be hard pressed to speak about dialogue without considering the utterance as both the *material* of communicative exchange and a *nexus* of intersubjectivity, making it an *index* of dialogue’s sociality. What does Kester have to say about Bakhtin’s theory of dialogue?

David Rooksby: I’ll pretend that I understood what you just said. But Bakhtin—remind me.

Shadworth Dyson: The Russian sociolinguist, literary theorist and philosopher of language, Mikhail Bakhtin.

Allison Jones: It’s a revealing question, Shadworth, because although Kester *declares* in the introduction to *Conversation Pieces* that his concept of dialogical art and aesthetics derives from Bakhtin’s sense that an artwork can be understood as ‘a kind of conversation’;²¹ and although Kester *says* this concept will be further clarified in his discussion on dialogical aesthetics later in his book;²² this is never forthcoming—and only brief mention of Bakhtin is made via two secondary accounts, namely Ken Hirschkop’s *Mikhail Bakhtin: An Aesthetic for Democracy*,²³ and Jeffery T. Nealon’s discussion of Bakhtin in *Alterity Politics: Ethics and Performative Subjectivity*.²⁴

Tina Wiseman: Those are both very useful sources.

Allison Jones: Indeed. Now, in addition to advancing a more nuanced understanding of communicative experience, Kester also insists on a dialogical artwork as a *process of communication* in contrast to a *physical object*.²⁵ Curiously, however, this is something else he foregoes exploring in depth. Instead, he turns his attention to the interlocutors’ identities in dialogical projects (so *who* they are) as well as the projects’ organisation (the *ways* in which the projects are structured and *how* they facilitate the interlocutors’ intersubjective exchange). He also considers the projects’ purpose (what they aim to accomplish).²⁶ But where is reference to dialogue as a *material process of communication*—reference to what, in particular, the dialogues in these projects entail? Their substance in contrast to their form or function? Where are the data—the actual dialogues—that justify Kester’s broad (though theoretically well-informed) conclusions, which he favours in lieu of close readings of actual dialogic exchange?

Now, an important reason for Kester’s more theoretical approach pertains to his *positionality* as a researcher. He tends to report *on* these artworks from the perspective of an interlocutor who is *not* directly involved in their production.²⁷ And, to be fair, Kester cites this as a limitation, observing that it makes it impossible, for instance, for him to gauge with any accuracy the interlocutors’ interactions in their authorial process²⁸—*what*,



Krista Wiseman

@KristaWiseman1

15s

#diacamp

Have you read GK's new book, The One and the Many? How's it compare to Conversation Pieces?

Expand Reply Delete Favorite



Assume the Position

@EllaandBrian

6s

#diacamp

Good—different. Will touch on in context review. :)

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Duchamp's Sister

@CassyAppadurai

now

We, the BC contributors, are interlocutors in this dialogue about dialogic art. #diacamp

Expand Reply Delete Favorite



Duchamp's Sister

@CassyAppadurai

now

RR5/5 AJ: To develop DA as a constitutive practice. #diacamp

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exactly, is expressed and what *implications* this has for their intersubjective exchange—as they author dialogical works of art.

Now, I should say that supplementing Kester’s reportage on dialogical art as an umbrella for dialogue-based practice, there are some artists, including Adrian Piper²⁹ and Suzi Gablik,³⁰ who *have* written about their practice from the perspective of practitioners who are directly involved in this art’s intersubjective exchange accreting through its authorial process. But these are, in effect, exceptions that prove the rule; first-hand examination of dialogue as intersubjective exchange in dialogue-based contemporary art remains *limited*. This points to *another* area where Marsha’s and my research may contribute to the field. As interlocutors in the *production* of dialogic artworks, and by researching them *through* practice, we may develop modes for cultivating, representing and disseminating the complexity of their co-authorial process, including the intersubjectivity to which they give rise.

I have one—no, actually *two* more rationales for researching dialogic art and evolving it as an approach that both overlaps and departs from dialogical art.

Krista Wiseman: Excuse me, Allison. It’s getting so stuffy in here. Do these windows open?

David Rooksby: Some air *would* be good.

Allison Jones: By all means, Krista. They’re not locked. Now, the second-to-last rationale concerns Kester’s ambivalence to aspects of dialogical artworks that are *not* explicitly discursive. These include aspects that have traditionally been perceived as *artistic*, as taking the form of *artistic expression*. So, for instance, Kester writes that it is ‘not through the manipulation of representational codes in painting and sculpture, but through processes of dialogue and collaborative production’ that identity is negotiated through dialogical artworks.³¹ But why separate dialogue from the material and symbolic practice of art? By doing so, isn’t Kester neglecting the *variety* of possible ways that dialogue can occur through *objects*, *materials* and *forms* of one kind or another—including but also in addition to verbal exchange? Informed by all your contributions today, we imagine dialogic art taking a different approach, one that acknowledges a *wider range* of dialogues.

Clark Chris: Well, yes of course! To my mind dialogic art is an approach to contemporary art based on dialogue as *labour*, different *kinds* of labour, working with different *kinds* of material and—

Allison Jones: Yes, I can see the connection here, but if you’ll allow me to finish, Clark. I would like to conclude this part of our welcome address by noting with critic and curator Nicolas Bourriaud that, ‘Artists look for interlocutors and involve them in the artwork’s production.’³² As Marsha has acknowledged, your contributions in this dialogue are indispensable to our research as we evolve a theory and practice of dialogic art.

With this in mind, a final rationale for our investigation—and this relates directly to today’s event—is to both evolve and understand dialogic art as a *constitutive practice*. This points to the general methodology organising



Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai5s

AJ: fine art is methodologically polyvalent—'adopts and adapts' from other fields. #diacamp

Expand ↩ Reply 🗑 Delete ★ Favorite



Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai10s

AJ: Maybe the way that (DA) is not other things points to its significance. #diacamp


Expand



TheJargonBuster @TheJargonBuste1now

#diacamp AJ: Inter-disciplinary = between disciplines; extra-disciplinary = beyond them.

Collapse ↩ Reply 🗑 Delete ★ Favorite



What is dialogic art @DialogicArtnow

#diacamp Negative identity of art = negation = other definitions possible, eg sociological, formal, religious, etc.

Expand ↩ Reply 🗑 Delete ★ Favorite

David Rooksby:
Allison Jones:

our research, which can be described in broad terms as ‘fine art’. Yet this distinction isn’t necessarily an easy one to make, beyond the fact that this research developed from Marsha’s practice as an artist and mine as an art historian—or by force of *nomination*, by virtue of an institutional definition that leans on the authority of the art school to authorise it as such.³³ In other words, we can think of this research as ‘fine art’ because it is supported by Chelsea College of Art and Design, University of the Arts London. The point at issue is this: when it comes to contemporary art practice, very little is methodologically intrinsic to this as fine art.³⁴ As the so-called artworlders here today will surely agree, the multiple forms, facets and functions of contemporary art makes it *methodologically polyvalent*.

Say what?
I’m saying this art depends on other fields, *adopting* and *adapting* their respective methods, sensibilities and other resources in the service of its needs. As my PhD supervisor, Mary Anne Francis, likes to say, when fine art deploys these disciplines in its service, it functions as something *other*—it operates differently than they do.³⁵ Looking at the barcamp’s sticky-note schedule (Fig. 1.0), it’s clear the understanding or understandings of dialogic art that we evolve today will be informed by a wide range of methodological and disciplinary approaches that *you*—the interlocutors—bring to bear. Yet, by emphasising the significance of our fine art research on dialogic art as *art*, it may, in effect, be the ways in which this art is *not* these other disciplines that it might acquire its artistic significance.³⁶

Now, a more positive spin on this sense of art’s *negative identity* is to understand it as *extra-disciplinary*. If interdisciplinary is *between* disciplines, then extra-disciplinary *goes beyond them*. Philosopher and theorist of cultural production Brian Holmes posits extra-disciplinarity in contemporary art as a vein of artistic practice—a kind of movement for turning *toward* and turning *back* via *reflexivity*. So extra-disciplinarity, in Holmes’s understanding, ‘conveys the desire or need to turn towards something else, towards an exterior field or discipline; while the notion of reflexivity indicates a critical return to the departure point, an attempt to transform the initial discipline’.³⁷ This bending back can open up ‘new possibilities of expression, analysis, cooperation and commitment’.³⁸ And what Holmes is observing here is a growing commitment in contemporary art to *regeneration*—not from *inside* the field of fine art, but from *beyond*.

Anne Lang:
Allison Jones:
Anne Lang:
Allison Jones:

Allison, may I interject to request, you know—a point of clarification?
By all means.
How are you really differentiating ‘extra-disciplinary’ from ‘trans-disciplinary’? I mean, couldn’t it be argued that ‘trans-disciplinary’ *better* describes ‘going beyond’ than ‘extra’ does?
Well, like ‘extra-disciplinary’, ‘trans-disciplinary’ is a contested term. In my understanding, the latter tends to deploy action research methods to solve often complex, real-world problems by pooling distinct knowledges.³⁹

 **TheJargonBuster** @TheJargonBuste1 7s
#diacamp AJ: Trans-disciplinary more utilitarian than extra-disciplinary and shores up disciplinary specialism.
Expand Reply Delete Favorite

 **Duchamp's Sister** @CassyAppadurai 7s
DA: trans-disciplinary in others (brings diverse points of view to bear)? #diacamp
Expand Reply Delete Favorite

 **Duchamp's Sister** @CassyAppadurai now
DR: Think and/also instead of either/or. #diacamp
Expand Reply Delete Favorite



Fig. 1.11

 **Duchamp's Sister** @CassyAppadurai now
BC is 'unconference' format. First BC in 2005 in California; format grew out of computer programming. #diacamp
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Trans-disciplinarity also emphasises the social aspect of problem solving to achieve ‘a common good.’⁴⁰ A designer, an engineer and a doctor may work together to improve a water distribution system by converging on this problem with their specialised knowledge. So I would say that trans-disciplinarity’s emphasis on *perspectivalism* makes it predisposed to shoring up disciplinary boundaries in contrast to blurring them, with experts approaching the task at hand from their personal-professional perspectives. Isn’t that what we’re doing in this barcamp? And yet you’re saying that dialogic art is ‘*extra-disciplinary*’.

Phil Hind:

Allison Jones: Perhaps it’s more a case of this art being *trans*-disciplinary in *some* ways and *extra*-disciplinary in *others*. I mean, perhaps dialogic art is *trans*-disciplinary in *structure*, as it brings diverse points of view to bear on each other, and *extra*-disciplinary in its *quest* to produce something—an artwork—that *subsumes* these perspectives under a mantel that is *not* sociology, *not* pedagogy, *not* education, etcetera.

David Rooksby: Well, when it comes to this meeting being *either*, what did you say?, trans-disciplinary *or* extra-disciplinary? Or a case of and/also? We’ll have to suck and see, won’t we? It’s still early days.

Marsha Bradfield: Agreed. Allie, this might be a good time for me to say a few words about the barcamp format, and then the contributors can introduce themselves.

Allison Jones: Certainly.

Marsha Bradfield: Very briefly, the first barcamp was in Palo Alto, California in 2005. It focused on computer programming, as did the other initial barcamps. Now, these user-generated ‘unconferences’, as they’re called, brought coders together to work on buggy programs, especially in early-stage web applications.⁴¹ In the case of our immediate barcamp, the so-called problem is expressed as the question, ‘What is dialogic art?’ That’s, clear by now, isn’t it? Yes? Good.

Moving right along, a central principle in barcamping is that *everyone* contributes; there are no tourists.⁴² I’ve invited some of you to discuss specific issues, while others responded to the open call. This comes onto the order of our barcamp contributions. I should mention that in keeping with barcamp practice, there is no preset schedule, because it depends on who shows up on the day. I’ve tried to organise your contributions thematically (Fig.1.0). But some are bound to sit next to each other more easily than others. Each contributor will have approximately forty minutes—which is about *four* times longer than the average barcamp slot—and we have some double presentations offered by duos, including Allison and me.

David Rooksby: So barcamp presentations are now the length of lectures. I thought the whole point was to give a quick-and-dirty demo, and then talk about it.

Marsha Bradfield: That’s true. But as this is an intimate gathering and we have the whole day, I thought this tweak would create space for deeper consideration of topics of interest.



Duchamp's Sister

@CassyAppadurai

7s

An account of BC will be published on marshabradfield.com—watch this space! [#diacamp](#)

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Duchamp's Sister

@CassyAppadurai

now

Transcript to include endnotes; MB encourages contributors to flesh out ideas here to supplement BC discussion. [#diacamp](#)

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What is dialogic art

@DialogicArt

1m

[#diacamp](#) Is MB saying this barcamp is a dialogic artwork (DAW)?

Expand



Duchamp's Sister

@CassyAppadurai

now

MB: This dialogic form is predisposed to going broad instead of deep. [#diacamp](#)

Expand

- Allison Jones:

At the same time, we encourage you to keep your prepared contributions short and split your time fifty-fifty—half of it being focused talk on a particular subject and the other half, responsive discussion. The hybridisation of these forms of address determines the barcamp as a particular mode of assembly.
- Marsha Bradfield:

Thanks, Allison. And thanks also to everyone for having their slide presentations ready to go. I’ve loaded them onto my laptop and will hand you the remote when it’s your turn. I should also mention we’re making an audio recording of this event and the transcripts will be published and publicly disseminated. I’m doing the transcribing myself and will keep editing to a minimum. Speaking of the barcamp’s collation, I expect some of your contributions will have citations,^{43*} which would be good to include as endnotes following each talk or demonstration for further reference. I’ll ask you to supply these in due course.


I should also say that I know from experience that barcamp discussions can move from topic to topic at a steady clip. The point is this dialogic form is predisposed to going *broad* instead of deep. You know, Kester says in *Conversation Pieces* that a ‘good’ *avant-garde* work of art is ‘provocative yet indeterminate, opaque yet open to differing responses’.⁴⁴ I think this also applies to barcamp discussion. In addition to digressing from topic to topic, barcamps unfold through a range of discursive approaches: exposition, exegesis, reflection, questions, interjections and other discursive techniques. All this is to say that, if engaging this discussion demands focused and responsive attention in the throes of its real-time exchange, it can be even *more* difficult to follow in *transcription*.
- KK Lin:

This may connect back to my comment about the distinction between an art practice merely being *available* and, um, being *accessible* in a *meaningful* way, though in this case you’re referring to the transcripts.
- Marsha Bradfield:

Yes, so when it comes to collating this barcamp, presenting it in fidelity to our discussion, capturing the gist of our exchange will be very much on my mind. I want it to be accessible to those who encounter it after the fact through its transcription. So it’s a question of fidelity *and* communicability. I have no doubt that balancing these distinct and potentially competing demands is sure to be challenging and I wonder—do you have any suggestions? This is my first time collating a barcamp.

47
- Shadworth Dyson:

Well, are you familiar, Marsha, with Bakhtin’s ‘superaddressee’? This could, perhaps, be a useful consideration in orienting our discussion—and your transcription. The ‘superaddressee’ is an authority beyond the immediate dialogue—an authority the interlocutors aim to address *in addition* to those actually present—and the superaddressee’s *absolute responsive understanding* is presupposed from a kind of metaphysical distance or displacement in time. In the case of a dialogue composed of two interlocutors, the superaddressee constitutes the *third*.⁴⁵ The significance being that bearing in mind this absent interlocutor may help us to anticipate the broader reception of our barcamp exchange.



Duchamp's Sister

CassyAppadurai

BC contributors to introduce themselves with 3 keywords. Please see TheJargonBuster's tweets. #diacamp

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TheJargonBuster

@TheJargonBuste1

MB's keywords (KW): barcamp, practice, dialogic forms #diacamp

Expand



TheJargonBuster

@TheJargonBuste1

AJ's KW: evaluative framework, rationales, methodological extra-disciplinary. #diacamp

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TheJargonBuster

@TheJargonBuste1

CC'S KW: Dialogue, dialogic, the dialogic

Expand



TheJargonBuster

@TheJargonBuste1

KL's KW: Representation, reflexivity, spatial relations. #diacamp

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TheJargonBuster

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ES's KW: collective collaboration, alienation. #diacamp

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TheJargonBuster

@TheJargonBuste1

Brian Updike's (BU) KW: agonism, immanence, relational practice. #diacamp

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TheJargonBuster

@TheJargonBuste1

SD's KW: utterance, literacy, Bakhtin. #diacamp

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TheJargonBuster

@TheJargonBuste1

KW's KW: embodiment, affect, politics. #diacamp

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Marsha Bradfield: I'll try and keep this in mind.

Allison Jones: And we encourage you all to do the same.

Cassy Appadurai: This communicability extends to the Twitter feed?

Marsha Bradfield: Yes, of course. Perhaps you could say more about this when we do the introductions, Cassy. The published version will spread across several registers, in keeping with the ones composing the barcamp as a real-time event. So in addition to the transcripts, the slides, the end notes and the appendices, the tweets will also be included. I think that's enough said about the barcamp's publication. What am I missing?

Allison Jones: Health and safety.

Marsha Bradfield: Everyone's favourite. It's a little unfortunate they're testing the fire alarm today at 2:15, but there's nothing we can do about it. So if the alarm rings at *another* time, please flee the building by following the signs. And we'll take lunch at the time of the test, as we'll have to vacate anyway. It's late, I know, so please help yourself to snacks.

So, with housekeeping done and dusted, let's do some introductions. If you could just offer your name and two or three keywords, and we'll do the intros in order of appearance. I'm a little late, but my words are 'barcamp,' 'practice' and 'dialogic forms'. Allison?

Allison Jones: Hello. As you know, I'm Allison Jones and my words are 'evaluative framework,' 'rationales' and 'methodological extra-disciplinarity'. Clark, you're next.

Clark Chris: 'Dialogue,' 'dialogic' and 'the dialogic'—and *labour*, of course.

KK Lin: Hello. I'm KK Lin and I have three key terms or phrases—'representation,' 'reflexivity' and 'spatial relations'.

Ella Stone: I'm Ella Stone. *Bonjour*. Shall I introduce my partner, Brian Updike, as we'll present together, one after the other? Your keywords, Brian?

Brian Updike: 'Context,' 'context,' 'context'.

Ella Stone: He is making a joke. My keywords are 'collective collaboration' and 'alienation'. Brian, *encore une fois, s'il vous plaît?*

Brian Updike: 'Agonism, immanence, relational practice'.

Marsha Bradfield: Your reference to 'immanence' reminds me that we were expecting the *eminent* Derridean Judith James. But I've received a text apologizing for her absence today. Now, I've asked Shadworth to speak about the significance of the utterance in dialogic art and I was hoping Judith's discussion of Derrida's deconstruction would be a foil for his Bakhtinian approach.

Shadworth Dyson: Well, yes, that would certainly have been an *interesting* conversation!⁴⁶ Perhaps another time. In any event, my keywords would have to be 'utterance,' 'literacy' and '*Bakhtin*'.

Krista Wiseman: Sooo, I'm next up and my name is Krista Wiseman and my words are 'affect,' 'bodies' and 'politics'.

Phil Hind: Bodies?



TheJargonBuster @TheJargonBuste1

52s

DR's KW: slogans, promotion, focus group. #diacamp

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TheJargonBuster @TheJargonBuste1

now

HM's KW: 'dialogic epistemology' and 'peer-to-peer exchange'. #diacamp

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TheJargonBuster @TheJargonBuste1

now

MC's KWs: Phrase — 'the death of the author and the birth of the reader and scriptor'. #diacamp

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TheJargonBuster @TheJargonBuste1

now

Wisemans' KW: responsive subjectivity, the ethics of authorial practice, Art Idol 2010. #diacamp

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TheJargonBuster @TheJargonBuste1

now

PH's KW: PARADE, Actor Network Theory, heterogeneous materials. #diacamp

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- Krista Wiseman:

Right. I haven’t actually prepared anything, but I’d like to say a few words about the *embodiment* of politics, the ways in which politics are located in and between our corporeal selves. David?
- David Rooksby:

That sounds cool. Well, I’m David Rooksby. It’s great to be here. Thanks, you guys, for organising this. It’s been terrific so far. So, ‘campaigns’ ‘promotion’, ‘focus group’. Oh and this is my PA, Tommy—Tommy Low. He is prepping my bit *as we speak* and I’ll explain why we chose this ‘just-in-time’ format for this gig later. It’s all good.
- Marsha Bradfield:

That just great, that’s everyone before lunch. Hillary, you’ll be kicking off the afternoon with an after-lunch review.
- Hillary Murphy:

Well hello, my name is Hillary Murphy and I’m an art educator. I’ll be approaching dialogic art from the perspective of pedagogic theory. I’ll facilitate the after-lunch review and discuss what I’ll term ‘dialogic epistemology’. Maeve, would you like to follow on from that?
- Maeve Cutty:

Thanks, Hillary. Rebel that I am, I think I’ll opt for one great long key phrase: ‘the death of the author and the birth of the reader and scriptor’. Tina?
- Tina Wiseman:

Well what to say? As artists who work largely in collaboration, Christian and I are interested in dialogic art from the perspective of ‘responsive subjectivity’ and ‘the ethics of authorial practice’, which we’ll consider with reference to Marsha’s project, ‘*Art Idol 2010*’.
- Marsha Bradfield:

Thank you. Phil?
- Phil Hind:


Thank *you*, Marsha. I’m Phil Hind and my key terms are ‘*PARADE*’, ‘Actor Network Theory’ and ‘heterogeneous materials’.
- Marsha Bradfield:

Cassy and Anne, could you say a few words about your respective roles in this barcamp?
- Cassy Appadurai:

Sure. I’m not an artist, curator or academic. I’m an art journalist and, instead of making a scheduled contribution, I’ll be microblogging the barcamp. The W5 in your contributions—who, where, why, what, when and how—is what I aim to capture in my tweets. So if I ask you to clarify these things, you’ll understand, well, *why*. I’d like to avoid misrepresenting anyone, if I possibly can.

Now, at the very beginning of this barcamp, Marsha spoke about the tweets being kind of like ‘live feedback’ and encouraged us to tweet and respond to tweets in our contributions. I think it’s worth mentioning that we may not be the only interlocutors involved in this conversation. I’m curious to see how well the tweets work to make an event like this barcamp accessible in Twitter as another space-time. So it’s worth bearing in mind the composition of your tweets. I recommend keeping them simple, expository—or, alternatively, poetic and impressionistic. I know that is an obvious thing to say, but these sorts of considerations will help those who aren’t here by making the barcamp a little more outwardly facing.


Also, I really like the idea of a ‘superaddressee,’ Shadworth. But I’ll be taking a different approach. I’m not sure it’s true, but I once heard that novelist Kurt Vonnegut wrote for his *sister*, Alice. Well, I’ll be tweeting for my



TheJargonBuster @TheJargonBuste1 6s

Cassy Appadurai (CA) says she's tweeting for her sister, Heather. Are you reading this? #diacamp

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TheJargonBuster @TheJargonBuste1 now

CA's KW: 140-character limit'. #diacamp


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Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai 3s

AL's KW: dialogic art lexicon. #diacamp


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Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai now

JJ: Agrees to minute BC questions. Thank you (TY) JJ. #diacamp

Expand



Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai now

JJ: Final session of the day—BC to produce guidelines for DA instead of a plenary. #diacamp

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TheJargonBuster @TheJargonBuste1 4s

JJ's KW: agent provocateur, guidelines, questions. #diacamp

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Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai 3s

JJ: Plenary as a synthesis at odds with dialogic form. #diacamp

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Anne Lang:

sister, *Heather*. She’s an intelligent person who is not part of the worlds of art, so I figure that if she can understand my tweets, then others will too. Heather is not so much an ideal respondent as she is representative of the kind of interlocutor we *may* encounter online.

Finally, if you’re addicted to acronyms, like I am, please define them on first use. My Twitter name is *Duchamp’s Sister*, by the way. And I guess my keywords would have to be ‘140-character limit’.

Hello, everyone. I’m Anne Lang. I’m an artist-researcher and cohort of Marsha’s and Allison’s at Chelsea, and my practice-based PhD investigates the ways in which contemporary art is *discursively* produced through verbal languages—I mean, both written and oral ones. I’ll be tweeting under the handle of *TheJargonBuster*. Basically, I’ll define terms that strike me as obscure or specialised, alright? And following on from Cassy’s comment, if I ask you to explain something—a word or an expression—it’s because, I mean, I’m trying to understand how it is that *you* are deploying this specific terminology. I’ll then try and encapsulate this gloss in the Twitter feed. My keywords are ‘dialogic art lexicon’, because that’s really what I’m hoping to seed over the course of the day. My tweets will be a sort of embedded and abbreviated glossary that Marsha, Allison or, really, *anyone* else with an interest in dialogic art can develop further at some point.

Cassy Appadurai: Marsha, earlier someone tweeted that we should keep a list of questions raised in the contributions. Could this be a way of minuting specific areas of interest, which we may or may not have time to discuss?

Marsha Bradfield: Well, I don’t doubt this *would* be useful. But it’s yet *another* task—more *complexity*, more *work*. Is there anyone here enthusiastic enough to take on the job of minuting the questions?

John Johnson: I’m already on it, as I figured they might inform how I tackle the guideline session at the end of the day.

Marsha Bradfield: Thanks, John. I should preface your introduction by saying that, in addition to being our designated *agent provocateur*, John will facilitate the barcamp’s final session, where we’ll establish some guidelines for dialogic art in light of the understanding or understandings evolved through our discussion. John, would you like to say something about this process? Maybe also mention *why* we plumped for guidelines instead of a plenary?

John Johnson: *Now?* Really? Okay, first let me say that my keywords are ‘*agent provocateur*,’ ‘guidelines’ and ‘questions’. I’m an artist and curator and I’m *fascinated* by organisational structures. Marsha, Allison and I often discuss our projects and, on occasion, work together. So when it came to rounding off this barcamp, we concluded that a plenary session was going to be at odds with the event’s format. A barcamp really is perfect for discussing dialogic art because it’s a dialogic form, *itself*. So, it just didn’t make sense to us to take today’s discussions—with all the complex layers that we have *no* doubt will emerge—and flatten it into a nice, neat, tidy overview but that would more than likely collapse all the interesting lumps and bumps into something, well, *flat*.



Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai10s

JJ: Guidelines not an account of BC's unfolding but a list of practical concerns. #diacamp

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Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurainow

One guideline per contributor; they don't all have to fit together. #diacamp

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Allison Allie Jones @AllisonAllieJon5s

#diacamp Guidelines—co-conclusive or non-conclusive outcome of the day, in contrast to uni-conclusive.

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Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurainow

AJ: We need communicable research outcomes! #diacamp

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Rather than that, we'll aim to produce a list of guidelines, a list that can accommodate and aggregate many of the elements we'll brave today—elements that won't necessarily fit together easily in a larger scheme. Our goal being that these guidelines will guide anyone interested in the theory and practice of dialogic art as they strive to move it forward.

So, look, here's my invitation: You each formulate *one* guideline over the course of the day in preparation for the final session, where we will bring them together. Each guideline should capture a recommendation that you believe is *indispensable* for the theory and practice of dialogic art, so you'll have to be selective. And we can only allow *one* guideline per contributor. Bear in mind that our list won't *chronicle* our discussion today—it won't be an account of the way the barcamp unfolds. That said, I *would* like to know how you *reach* your selections. And it would be good to hear whether your perceptions *change* over the course of the day—and, if so, *how*. I mention this in advance because, look, I'm well aware that articulating this kind of knowledge-on-the-move can be a 'big ask'. But I'm asking it all the same, as we—Marsha, Allison and I—believe it could be an interesting experiment.

David Rooksby: You were saying something about 'aggregating elements that don't necessarily fit together easily in a larger scheme'. Did anyone else catch that? I know I didn't.

John Johnson: Okay, there are various answers to this. I'll offer just one, related to consensus. We'll discuss the guidelines in the final session but we need not reach agreement on their significance. Some may even conflict, and I think this is okay. I mean, we can rejig them through our discussion, right? Let's see how it goes.


Now, consensus is one thing, but communicability is another. To echo Marsha's and KK's concerns and the microbloggers' suggestions about formulating tweets, bear in mind that, as a *resource*, your guideline should be accessible and meaningful to those in attendance today as well as *others* beyond our immediate gathering—artists, researchers, curators, critics and *other* others who are interested in dialogic art. This double-relevance is another 'big ask'. But, I mean, I think it's an important one because—

Allison Jones: Important? It's absolutely vital! We need *communicable* research outcomes. 55

John Johnson: Okay, Allie, but let's not get too hung up on outcomes too soon. Let's see how we get on with researching through the barcamp's dialogic structure. Look, enough said about the guidelines for now. Thanks, Marsha and Allison, for your welcome address and especially for outlining the rationales. But I sense I speak for everyone when I say it's high time that we moved into the other contributions. Right?

Marsha Bradfield: One final word about the publication: I would like to include your—the contributors'—biographies as an appendix. These will be accompanied by a brief description of your barcamp contribution—a kind of *post hoc* abstract, a two or three-sentence summary. Please submit these in due course. (See A.2)

Alison Jones: One final, final comment.




Duchamp's Sister

@CassyAppadurai

MB: Welcome to 'What is dialogic art?!' #diacamp

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now



Duchamp's Sister

@CassyAppadurai

Barcamp claps. #diacamp

Expand

10m

- David Rooksby:

Seems like *someone* has to have the last word.
- Allison Jones:

I was just going to mention that I know I speak for Marsha when I say we’re both very curious about your respective interests in dialogic art. Perhaps you could say a word or two at the beginning of your presentations about what brought you here today if you haven’t already.
- Marsha Bradfield:

And I know I speak for Allison when I say, we can’t thank you enough for being part of this event. Welcome to, ‘What is dialogic art?’
- KK Lin:

Should we clap?
- Marsha Bradfield:

By all means. Clark, you’re our next protagonist.
- [Barcamp claps.]

¹ Critical Practice Research Cluster, ‘Critical Practice’, Critical Practice Chelsea, <http://www.criticalpracticechelsea.org> (accessed March 10, 2012). As stated on the wiki, ‘Critical Practice is a cluster of individual artists, researchers, academics and others, supported by Chelsea College of Art & Design, London. Through [their] aims [they] intend to promote critical practice within art, the field of culture and organization . . . Critical Practice seeks to avoid the passive reproduction of art, and uncritical cultural production. Our research, projects, exhibitions, publications and funding, our very constitution and administration are legitimate subjects of critical enquiry’.

² Cassandra S. Crawford, ‘Actor Network Theory’, vol. 1 of *Encyclopedia of Social Theory*, ed. George Ritzer (London: Sage, 2005), 1.

³ Ken Hirschkop, ‘Introduction: Bakhtin and Cultural Theory’, in *Bakhtin and Cultural Theory*, eds. Ken Hirschkop and David Shepherd (Manchester: University of Manchester Press, 1989), 3. Hirschkop raises a similar string of questions regarding Mikhail Bakhtin’s theory of dialogue: ‘What is this “dialogism” that so many celebrate as liberating and democratic: what are its actual cultural forms, its social or political preconditions, its participants, methods and goals?’ Tom Cohen quotes Hirschkop’s questions, observing that all too often they go unasked—let alone answered—in discussions about Bakhtin. See Tom Cohen, ‘The Ideology of Dialogue: The Bakhtin/De Man (Dis)Connection’, *Cultural Critique*, no. 33 (Spring 1996): 43.

⁴ Joel Nell and Matthew Taylor, *Arts Funding, Austerity and the Big Society: Remaking the Case for the Arts*, RSA 21st Century Enlightenment (London: RSA, 2011), 7. Published by the Royal Society of the Arts, the introductory remarks in this pamphlet on funding state that the current economic downturn ‘will require the arts to improve existing rationales, but also embrace new ways of telling a richer story about how they create value. The Commission on 2020 Public Services at the RSA has called for more public investment to be evaluated in terms of a “social productivity test”: whether it builds individual and community engagement, resilience and reciprocity. How can the arts best frame and pass that test?’.

⁵ See Kelly Large, ‘Me, Myself and I’, transcripts (n.p.: New Art Gallery Walsall, 2008). The exploration of funding structures and labour contracts through artistic practice indicates a trend in institutional critique. Consider, for example, Kelly Large’s experiment with the ‘open studio afternoons’ that she was required to deliver as part of her residency at The New Art Gallery Walsall. Fulfilling the terms of her employment, Large invited guest artists, including Marsha Bradfield and her supervisor Mary Anne Francis, to interact with the gallery’s public on Large’s behalf.

⁶ Neil Cummings, ‘The Object,’ Neil Cummings, <http://www.neilcummings.com/content/object> (accessed September 10, 2011).

⁷ Michel Foucault, ‘What is an Author?’ in *The Foucault Reader: An Introduction to Foucault’s Thought*, ed. Paul Rainbow (New York: Penguin, 1991), 103–104.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid., 117.

¹⁰ John Stewart and Milt Thomas, ‘Dialogic Listening: Sculpting Mutual Meanings’ in *Bridges Not Walls: A Book about Interpersonal Communication*, ed. John Stewart, 6th ed. (London: McGraw-Hill, 1995), 186. The idea of dialogue being a form of communication that is encumbered by ideological baggage is noted by Stewart and Thomas when, with reference to empathetic listening in the context of dialogue, they describe it as ‘intuitively appealing’. Claire Bishop makes a similar observation in ‘Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics’, *October* 110 (Fall 2004): 65. Bishop keys into the presumed ‘goodness’ of dialogue in her critique of Nicolas Bourriaud’s relational aesthetics and her view that it defaults to producing artworks that cultivate conviviality. For a more balanced discussion of dialogue as a form predisposed to a wide range of agendas, see Tom Cohen, ‘The Ideology of Dialogue: The Bakhtin/De Man (Dis)Connection’, *Cultural Critique*, no. 33 (Spring 1996): 41–86.

¹¹ See Ella Stone’s and Brian Updike’s barcamp contributions on relational aesthetics in this collation for an expanded discussion on how relational art explores intersubjective exchange.

¹² Nicolas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics* (Dijon, FR: Les presses du réel, 2008), 15–16.

¹³ Marsha Bradfield, RF3 (University of the Arts London Registration Document, 2007).

¹⁴ Grant Kester, *Conversation Pieces: Community and Communication in Modern Art* (London: University of California Press, 2004), 8.

¹⁵ Grant Kester, ‘Dialogical Aesthetics: A Critical Framework for Littoral Art’, *Variant* 9 (Winter 1999/2000) <http://www.variant.org.uk/9texts/KesterSupplement.html> (accessed June 10, 2011).

¹⁶ Kester, *Conversation Pieces*, 90.

¹⁷ Ibid., 108.

¹⁸ Grant Kester, ‘Conversation Pieces: The Role of Dialogue in Socially-Engaged Art’, in *Theory in Contemporary Art Since 1985*, ed. Zoya Kucor and Simon Leung (London: Blackwell, 2005), 82.

¹⁹ Kester, *Conversation Pieces*, 108.

²⁰ Ibid., 10.

²¹ Ibid., Kester writes, ‘For reasons that will become more apparent in subsequent chapters, I will be using the term dialogical to describe [the kind of artworks and practice explored here]. The concept of dialogical art practice is derived from Mikhail Bakhtin, who argues that the work of art can be viewed as a kind of conversation—a locus of differing meanings, interpretations, and points of view. I will clarify my particular definition of the term in the context of art practice in Chapter 3’.

²² Ken Hirschkop, *Mikhail Bakhtin: An Aesthetic for Democracy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 20. Kester also references Mikhail Bakhtin’s ‘Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity’ and ‘Art and Answerability’, both in *Art and Answerability: Early Philosophical Essays by M. M. Bakhtin*. However, specific discussion of these texts does not figure in Kester’s argument. For a useful introduction to Bakhtin, see Ken Hirschkop’s ‘Introduction: Bakhtin and Cultural Theory’, in *Bakhtin and Cultural Theory*, ed. Ken Hirschkop and David Shepherd (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1993), 1–38.

²³ Jeffrey T. Nealon, ‘The Ethics of Dialogue: Bakhtin’s Answerability and Levinas’s Responsibility’, in *Alterity Politics: Ethics and Performative Subjectivity* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1998), 31–52.

²⁴ Kester, *Conversation Pieces*, 110.

²⁵ Ibid., 111.

²⁶ Grant Kester and Mick Wilson, ‘Autonomy, Agonism, and Activist Art: An Interview with Grant Kester’, *Art Journal* 3 (Fall 2007): 109. Kester explores the challenges of engaging dialogical art practices when he says, ‘The immersive, sustained nature of these projects (many of which unfold over weeks, months, or even years) impose different demands on the critic: a different sense of rhythm and duration in your relationship with the artist. I can’t simply visit a museum or biennial and view a given sculpture or installation. I need to spend some time with the artist, ideally in the site or the actual project, talking to other participants and trying to gain a sense of its gestalt’.

²⁷ Kester, *Conversation Pieces*, 144. Kester observes that, in the case of dialogical artist Dawn Dedeaux and her *Soul Shadows: Urban Warrior Myths*, ‘It is impossible at this point to accurately gauge the interactions that occurred between Dedeaux and her collaborators’.

²⁸ See for instance, Adrian Piper, ‘III. Note on “Notes and Qualifications” (Further Qualifications)’, in vol. 1 of *Out of Order, Out of Sight: Selected Writings in Meta-art 1968–1992*. (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1996), 38–53.

²⁹ Suzi Gabblik, ‘Connective Aesthetics’, *American Art* 6 (2, 1997), 2–7.

³⁰ Kester, *Conversation Pieces*, 153. Kester also acknowledges early on in *Conversation Pieces* that he ‘gives little attention to the role played by sensory experience’ in the projects that he explores, 12.

³¹ Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*, 81.

³² Mary Anne Francis, ‘The Artist as a Multifarious Agent: An Artist’s Theory of the Origin of Meaning,’ (PhD thesis, Goldsmiths College, University of London, 2000), 8. Francis also notes that her PhD research is nominated as Fine Art by the institution of the art school.

³³ Kester, *Conversation Pieces*, 90. Kester offers a complimentary idea to there being little that is methodologically intrinsic to fine art practice when he writes, ‘There is nothing inherent in a given work of art that allows it to play this role; rather, particular formal arrangements take on meaning only in their relationship to specific cultural moments, institutional frames, and preceding artworks.’

³⁴ Francis, ‘The Artist as a Multifarious Agent’, 8.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Brian Holmes, ‘Extradisciplinary Investigations: Toward a New Critique of Institutions’, european institute for progressive cultural policies <http://eipcp.net/transversal/0106/holmes/en> (accessed September 10, 2011).

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Gertrude Hirsch Hadorn, Susette Biber-Klemm, Walter Grossebacher-Mansuy, Holger Hoffman-Riem, Dominique Joye, Christian Pohl, Urs Wiesmann and Elizabeth Semp, ‘Chapter Two: The Emergence of Transdisciplinarity as a Form of Research’, in *Handbook of Transdisciplinary Research*, ed. Gertrude Hirsch Hadorn, Holger Hoffman-Reim, Susette Biber-Klemm, Walter Grossebacher-Mansuy, Dominique Joye, Christian Pohl, Urs Wiesmann and Elizabeth Zemp (n.p.: Springer, 2008), 25–27.

³⁹ Holger Hoffman-Riem, Susette Biber-Klemm, Walter Grossebacher-Mansuy, Gertrude Hirsch Hador, Dominique Joye, Christian Pohl, Urs Wiesmann, Elizabeth Zemp, ‘Chapter One: The Idea of the Handbook’, in *Handbook of Transdisciplinary Research*, (n.p.: Springer, 2008), 18.

⁴⁰ Wikipedia contributors, ‘BarCamp’, *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia* <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/BarCamp> (accessed January 10, 2011).

⁴¹ WikiBooks, ‘BarCamp—How to Run Your Own/The Rules of BarCamp’, WikiBooks http://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/BarCamp_-_How_to_Run_Your_Own/The_Rules_of_BarCamp (accessed September 10, 2011).

⁴²*The interlocutors making the utterances to which the endnotes refer in this collation composed most of them. However, from time to time, as the transcriber, I felt it necessary to expand on particular points that were either insufficiently explored in the contribution and/or that the interlocutors felt unnecessary to expand on themselves in the notes. These supplementary comments are indicated with an *.

⁴³ Kester, *Conversation Pieces*, 20.

⁴⁴ M. M. Bakhtin, *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*, eds. Caryl Emerson and Michael Hoquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986), 126.

⁴⁵ Why underpin dialogic art with Mikhail Bakhtin’s theory of meta-linguistics instead of Jacque Derrida’s deconstruction? To begin with, both Derrida and Bakhtin critique Ferdinand de Saussure’s structural linguistics—how signs, through this system, generate meaning. For Derrida, the limitations of Saussure’s linguistics reside in good part with all signs referring to other signs, and this has two implications. On the one hand, the meaning of a sign arises through its *différance* (see Jacques Derrida, ‘Linguistics and Grammatology,’ in *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakrovorty Spivak [London: John Hopkins University Press, 1997], 27–65). *Différance* refers to a sign’s location and relation—its dependency on this for being different from others within the synchronous sign-system. This can be understood as the body of signs in concurrent operation within the same system. At the same time, because all signs refer to other signs, meaning is endlessly deferred, dispersed along an ongoing chain of signification. Consequent to this, meaning, for Derrida, is never present, resulting in the interpretation of meaning being a relentless pursuit.

The metaphor of the chain is also central to Bakhtin’s meta-linguistics (see my [Shadworth Dyson’s] barcamp contribution in this transcription). However, in Bakhtin’s case, the chain is an historical phenomenon that links together utterances—past, present and future. Though it is true to say that meaning is dispersed along this chain, the crucial difference between Derrida and Bakhtin is that Bakhtin sidesteps the endlessness of interpretation of meaning when he insists on the primacy of its immediate social production and interpretation by way of its social evaluation (see M. M. Bakhtin and P. N. Medvedev, *The Formal Method in Literay Scholarship: A Critical Introduction to Sociological Poetics* [Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991], 119–128). Simply put, Bakhtin engages with the pragmatics of language while Derrida’s deconstruction is more speculative. Resultantly, when it comes to prioritizing either Derrida or Bakhtin in Marsha Bradfield and Allison Jones’s research, it is advisable that they determine whether or not they are principally concerned with philosophical theory (in which case Derrida would be a better fit) or with the pragmatics of practice (in light of which, Bakhtin may be better suited).

⁴⁶ Annemarie Mol and John Law, ‘Complexities: An Introduction,’ in *Complexities: Social Studies of Knowledge Practices*, ed. John Law and Annemarie Mol (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2002), 7.

10:10




Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai

CC: Thinks dialogic art is about labour. #diacamp

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14s



Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai

CC: This BC contribution is a PechaKucha— but what makes it a dialogic form? #diacamp

Expand

17s

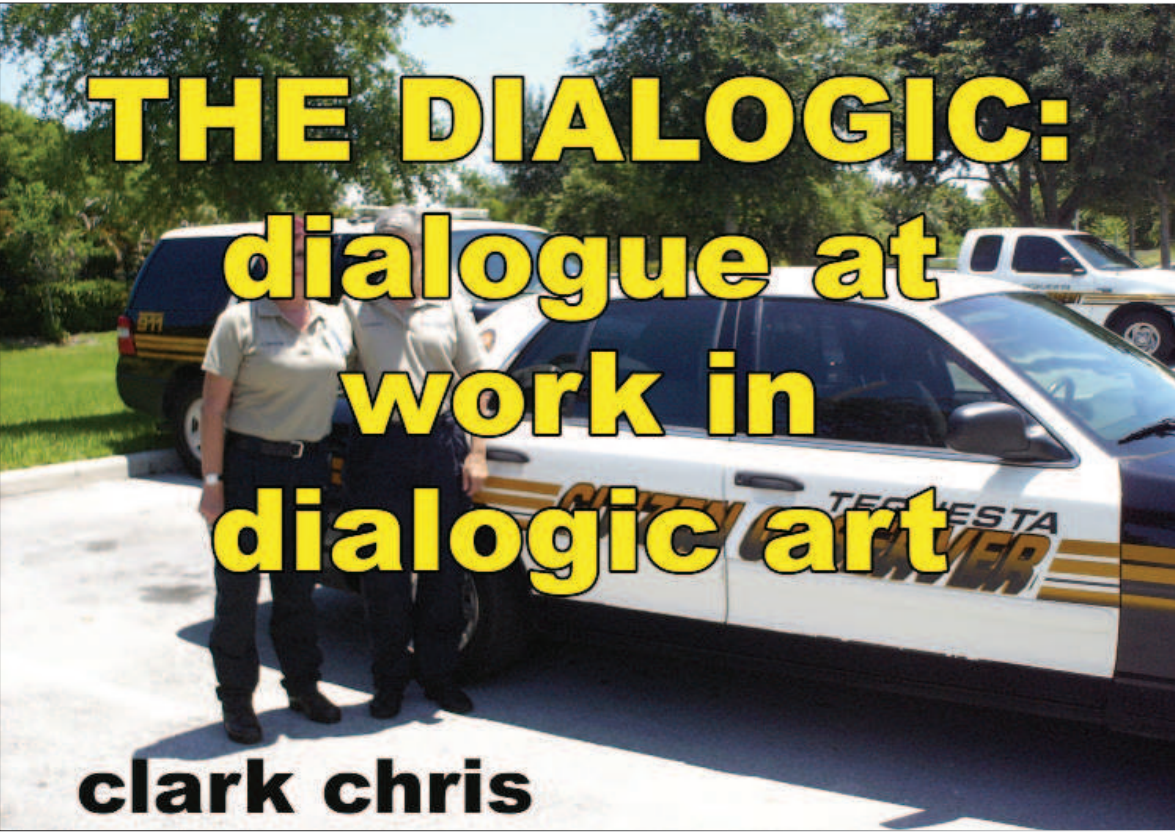


Fig. 2.0

Clark Chris:

Thanks, Marsha. I’ve already mentioned my reasons for being here today; I shouldn’t need to review, should I? No. Right, then, let’s crack on. So I think dialogic art is really about labour.^{1*} And we’re going to test this theory in an extra-large PechaKucha.

Allison Jones:

PechaKucha?

Clark Chris:

Not heard of it? Seriously? Well, all right. The name, PechaKucha, comes from the Japanese for ‘chit-chat’. The first PechaKucha evening was held as a kind of networking event for young designers and architects in Tokyo in February of 2003 and used a tight format of brief and focused presentations. Now, there are normally twenty slides in PechaKuchas, and each one shows for twenty seconds.² But in this case, there are twenty-five—I found twenty was just *too* few for what I wanted to accomplish. So, over the next eight minutes and thirty seconds, *precisely*, I’ll float a way of putting dialogue to *work* in dialogic art.³

Basically, PechaKucha is another dialogic form. Earlier, Marsha likened the prepared parts of our contributions to *primers* for discussion, right? Well keep this in mind, as it will shape how you interpret what *I* have to say—or, at least, it *should*. If you could hold your questions and comments until the end, there will be lots of time for discussion.

dialogue

¹dɪˈɒləɡˌlɒɡ | (also **dialog**)

Oxford English Dictionary

1. a conversation carried on between two or more persons; a colloquy, talk together;

2. a literary work in the form of a conversation between two or more persons;

3. such a composition set to music for two or more voices

4. an attribute or combination, as in the form of a dialogue-author

Fig. 2.1



(Fig. 2.2) Now, obviously, to understand dialogic art, we have to know what ‘dialogue’ means. I have a handout of my slide for you to take away. (Fig. 2.1) It reproduces part of the Oxford English Dictionary’s entry on ‘dialogue’.



(Fig 2.3) You’ll note here that the noun, ‘dialogue’, is defined as: (1) a conversation carried on between two or more persons; a colloquy, talk together; (2) a literary work in the form of a conversation between two or more persons; (3) such a composition set to music for two or more voices; (4) an attribute or combination, as in the form of a dialogue-author.⁴

Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai

17s

CC: The 'di' in dialogue is not 'two' as in diachromatic but 'through' as in diameter. #diacamp

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TheJargonBuster @TheJargonBuste1

8s

#diacamp The 'di' in dialogue not 2 but through as in diameter.

Expand Reply Delete Favorite

Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai

4s

CC: Dialogue can be understood as a threshold across speech or space through or across speech. #diacamp


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(Fig. 2.4) The term’s origin, so the dictionary tells us, comes from the Middle English via the Old French word, ‘dialoge’, which is taken from the Greek ‘dialogos’, meaning ‘to converse with’, from ‘dia’, meaning ‘through’ and ‘legein’ meaning ‘speak’.⁵



(Fig. 2.5) The etymology of the word, ‘dialogue’ is revealing. The ‘dia’ is often mistaken for the Greek prefix ‘di’, meaning *two*, as in ‘*dichromatic*’, the occurrence of two colours. We may think of dialogue as a conversation between two people, and two only. What few people realise is that the ‘dia’ in ‘dialogue’ actually means *through*, as in ‘*diameter*’.⁶ Knowing that, anyone can see that dialogue is really better understood as a threshold across speech, if you will, or as a space *through* or *across*.



Assume the Position @EllaandBrian

#diacamp Communication? Based on Language. What are the implications for combining languages—verbal and visual?

Expand Reply Delete Favorite

now



Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai

CC: Dialogue = communication. Dialogue is also productive interaction = creation. #diacamp

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4s



Maeve Cutty @MaaveCutty

#diacamp Dialogue as a grand narrative?

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20s



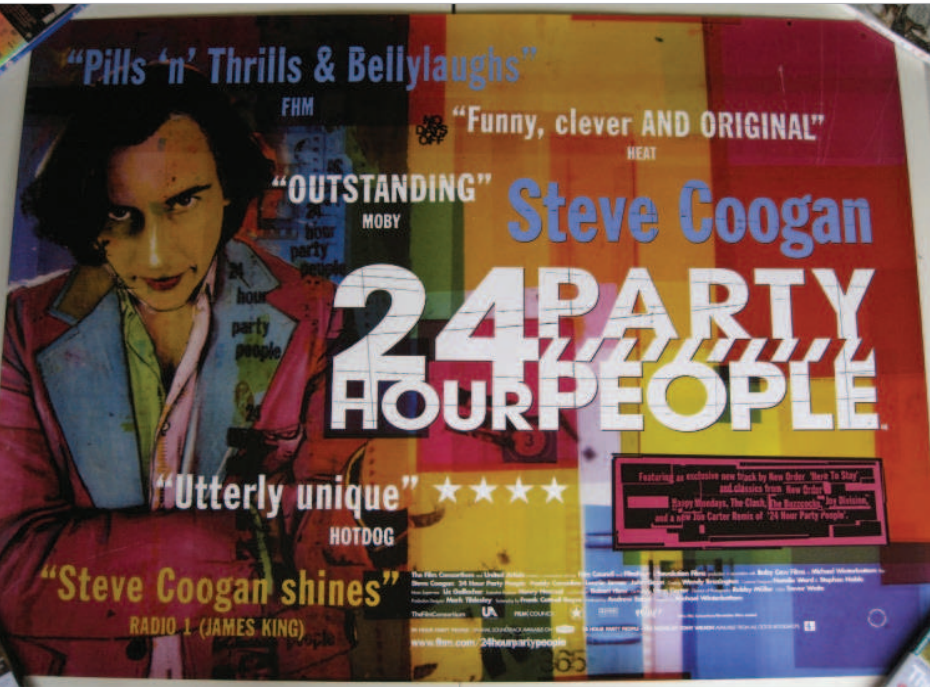
(Fig. 2.6) So, clearly, dialogue is more than just a conversation between two interlocutors. There can be *many* involved. And if you think about it, why should we limit dialogue to *verbal* exchange? Why not also use it to refer to *visual*, *haptic* or *other* kinds of communication? So now, when I say ‘dialogue’, what I refer to is a form of communication that alternates between two or more interlocutors. Their expressions issue across from and perhaps in opposition to each other as the interlocutors converse.



(Fig. 2.7) Now, dialogue as communication is one thing; dialogue as *creation* is another. To expand our sense of dialogue, we might also think of it as *productive interaction*—interaction between people, systems, things, thoughts and other interlocutors. If you think about it, you can’t help but realise that dialogue is what keeps the planet turning.



(Fig 2.8) As interaction, dialogue knows that reality is composed of things—objects, the body, social norms, conventions and all the rest. But dialogue also insists that, in reality, things are only meaningful *in relation* to each other. It should then become apparent that this simply makes ‘dialogue’ another name for ‘relativity’.⁷



(Fig 2.9) Earlier, Phil said that dialogue describes ‘perspectival diversity’—the interplay of distinct positions and different points of view. So you should be able to see that dialogue *bridges* difference, but also *negotiates* it. Let me simplify that: dialogue brings disparate entities together in the same space or frame and helps them communicate.⁸



Duchamp's Sister

CassyAppadurai

now

CC: Dialogue can stymie us with its enthusiasm and reproduction.
#diacamp

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(Fig 2.10) Dialogue also knows something about *sharing*. It's a commonsense that what is yours is yours and what is mine is mine. But understanding dialogue more clearly teaches us that this division denies that, for better or for worse, we're all in this together—because *existence* is dialogic.⁹ Dialogue is like the weather. It surrounds us and reminds us we are beholden to forces beyond our control.



(Fig 2.11) Like a force of nature, dialogue is objective and mysterious. It doesn't *care* who you are. Anyone can engage in dialogue or be engaged by it. But what you have to understand is that it's complicated. It's not always easy to know where one dialogue ends and another begins, because dialogue is *protean*. It knows this and can use it against us. It *stymies* us with its own enthusiasm and reproduction. 'Dialogue' becomes 'dialogues' quicker than you can say 'dialogic art'.



(Fig. 2.12) I'm going to let you in on a secret. It's not that dialogue is hard. Dialogue is easy; any fool can do it. What's hard is turning 'dialogue' into 'dialogic art'. What's more, the main thing keeping any dialogic artist from making dialogic art— paradoxically, and whether they realise it or not— is *dialogue*. So how, you ask, can a dialogic artist take up dialogue through dialogic art without being submerged into utter *chaos*?



(Fig. 2.13) Well, here is an important distinction for you all to consider: in common usage, 'dialogic' is an adjective meaning 'related to or in the form of dialogue'. So, we might well think of 'dialogic art' in the same way— as art related to or in the form of dialogue. But don't. That would be a mistake— understandable, perhaps, but a mistake, nonetheless.




Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai

CC: 'Dialogic art' takes its name from 'the dialogic', in contrast to 'dialogue'. #diacamp

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now



Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai

CC: 'The dialogic' = the vocation of dialogue. #diacamp

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now



(Fig. 2.14) It’s not from the word ‘dialogic’ that the term ‘dialogic art’ takes its name—it’s just not that simple. Rather, it’s from *‘the dialogic’*. Like the adjective ‘dialogic’, ‘the dialogic’ describes interaction, relativism, difference and sharing. ‘The dialogic’ is also, and as I have said, *protean*. By that I mean, it arises from dialogue, and includes it, but it also goes beyond it.



(Fig. 2.15) To understand what I mean by this ‘going beyond’, think of ‘the dialogic’ as the *vocation* of dialogue. The dialogic’s higher calling is to manage dialogue—its dialogic tendencies, in particular, as well as its enthusiasm and fecundity. Clearly, we must also understand ‘the dialogic’ as desire. It’s what dialogue *wants* for itself but can’t achieve on its own.



(Fig 2.16) I’m sure you’ve all heard the old adage that goes, ‘Keep your friends close and your enemies closer’. These are words by which ‘the dialogic’ in dialogic art lives and dies as it puts dialogue to *work*. If, however, this strikes you as all too protestant, and a more playful figuration would be easier and more fun to grasp, think instead of dialogic art as a game where the dialogues composing it play by ‘the dialogic’s’ rules.



(Fig. 2.17) In this game, dialogue moves back and forth and between interlocutors, playing at the borders of its own limits. The point here is neither to applaud the act of dialogue, nor to win; the point is, rather, to win points while keeping the exchange in play—the back and forth and between.



TheJargonBuster @TheJargonBuster1

[#diacamp](#) The 'dialogic bonus' is like a point scored in a game in contrast to a winning score.

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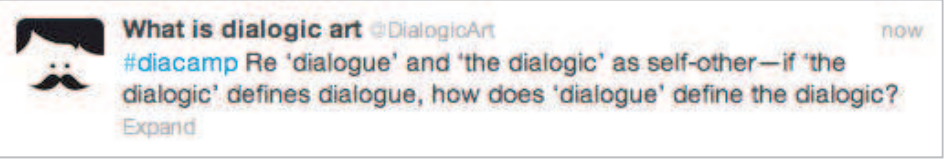
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(Fig. 2.18) Another expression I’m sure you’ve all heard is that ‘so-and-so is their own worst enemy’. When it comes to dialogic art, ‘the dialogic’ is not dialogue’s worst enemy but its best opponent. ‘The dialogic’ is not a peripheral opposition to dialogue, but one that comes from within.



(Fig. 2.19) Earlier, I said ‘the dialogic’ has much in common with dialogue, but it also goes beyond it. The result of this ‘going beyond’ is what I want to call ‘the dialogic bonus’. ‘The dialogic bonus’ is like a point scored in a game as opposed to the winning score.



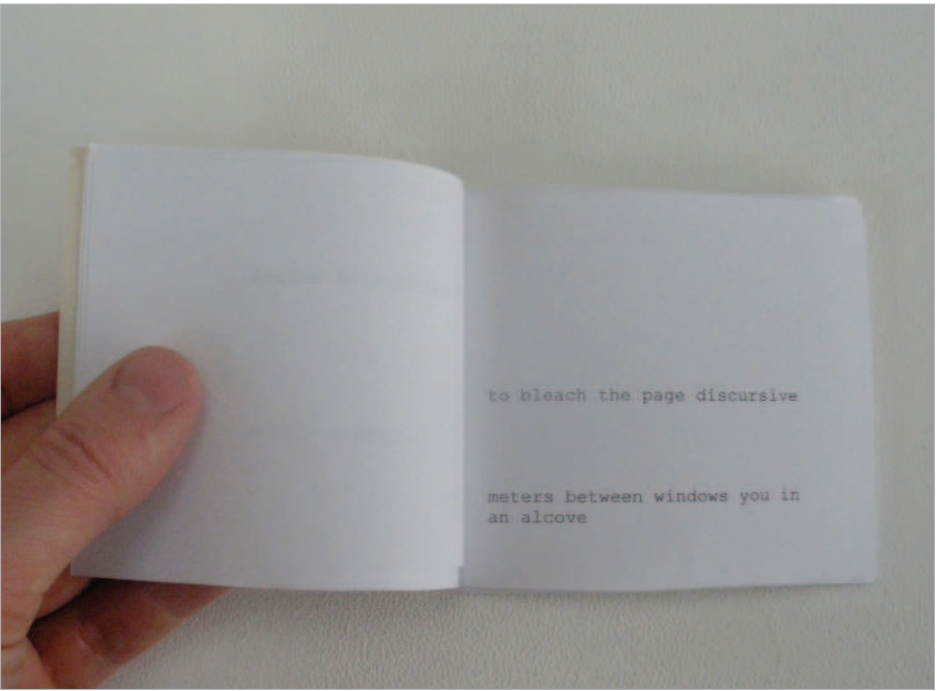
(Fig. 2.20) Now, I've also said that we should think of 'the dialogic' as dialogue's own best opponent. They're well matched. And deep down, dialogue knows this—and it knows it *needs* 'the dialogic's' management. But, like one artist resenting another's more highly developed talents, dialogue also resents it.



(Fig. 2.21) In point of fact, dialogue will do anything to undermine or overpower its archival. So the best way 'the dialogic' can self-manage dialogue is to beat it at its own game. 'The dialogic' has to be *more* protean, *more* objective and *more* attentive to the interaction, relationalism, difference and sharing that preoccupy dialogue.



(Fig. 2.22) To outsmart dialogue, ‘the dialogic’ also has to be adept at changing shape. It’s not *one* thing, but a range of *tactics* for advancing ‘the dialogic’s’ vocational strategy. So there is *dialogic strategy* supported by *dialogic tactics*. These *tactics* are defined by this *strategy*, but neither can exist independently.



(Fig. 2.23) At least some of these tactics can be resourced from dialogue and applied to it with positive effect. I’ve already mentioned relativity and interaction, for example. In a dialogic artwork, these could be tactics, topics or both—I’ll leave this part to your imagination.



What is dialogic art

@DialogicArt

now

#diacamp

'The dialogic' fetishised as labour—a good worker, but what about pleasure and joy

Expand



TheJargonBuster

@TheJargonBuster1

now

#diacamp

The 'dialogic disposition' = how 'the dialogic' deploys its strategy and tactics to reproduce itself.

Expand



Duchamp's Sister

@CassyAppadurai

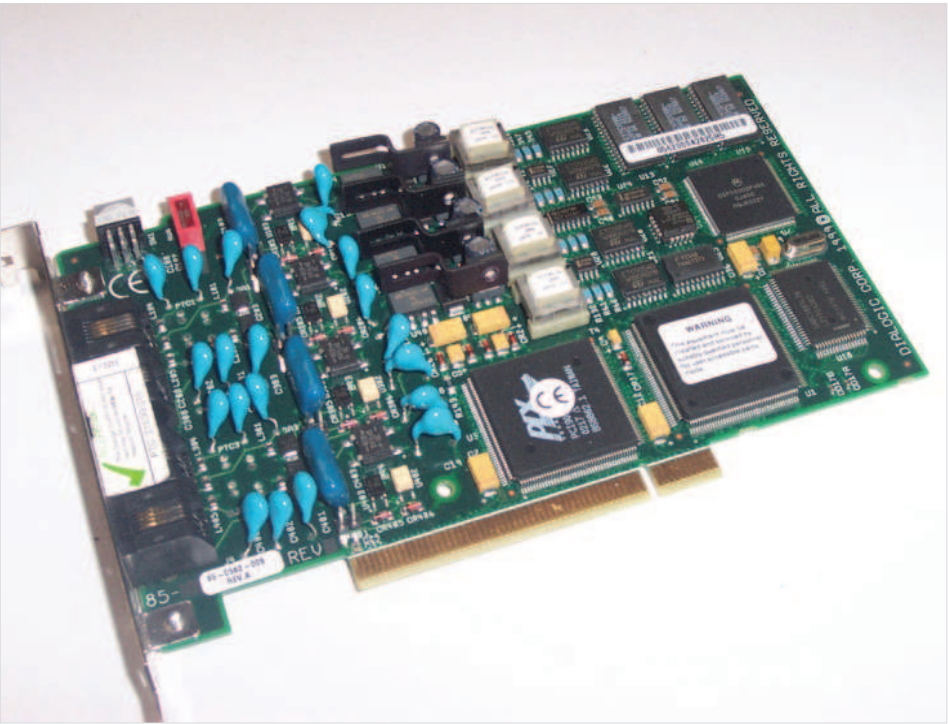
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Dialogic art is distinct from other dialogue- based practices by it's skillful self-management of dialogues. #diacamp

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(Fig. 2.24) A final note about ‘the dialogic’: like the finest artists, it works both hard and smart. It’s diligent and relentless in its duties, but it’s also strategic—wily, even. So ‘the dialogic’s’ work ethic has a certain *disposition*. It’s through this ‘dialogic disposition’ that ‘the dialogic’ reproduces itself as it deploys tactics to manage the dialogues composing dialogic art. If dialogue couldn’t be managed, this art form *wouldn’t* exist. So, in general terms, ‘the dialogic’ differentiates dialogic art from other types of what we’ve been calling, for far too long, ‘dialogue-based contemporary art practice’. This distinction turns on ‘the dialogic’s’ skillful self-management of the dialogues composing this art form.





Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai

CC: Dialogic art is rife with forces and counter forces.
#diacamp

Expand

30s



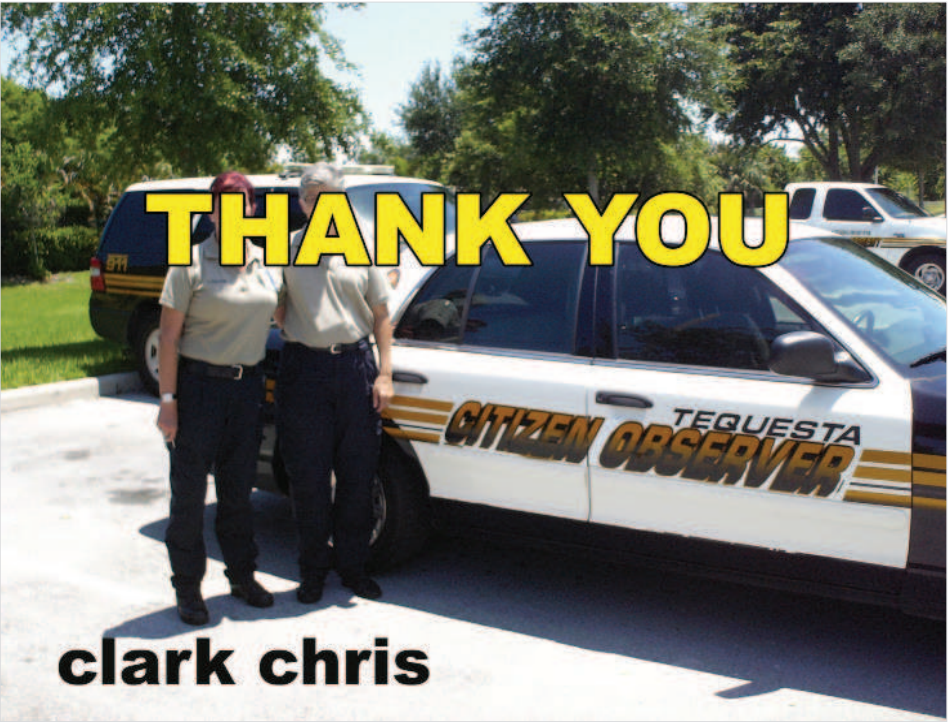
Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai

Barcamp claps. #diacamp

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10m

That’s *a lot* to absorb—I, of all people, know that—so let me sum up to provide you with some of the clarity I’ve come to. In this PechaKucha, I have said ‘the dialogic’ is: (1) more than dialogue; (2) a way of self-managing dialogue; (3) dialogue’s own best opponent; (4) resented by dialogue; and (5) smarter than dialogue. I’ve also said that we can think of dialogue in terms of *work* and *sport*, both of which depend on *labour*. And I’ve introduced several aspects or expressions of ‘the dialogic’, including ‘the dialogic bonus’, ‘the dialogic disposition’, ‘dialogic tactics’ and ‘dialogic strategies’.



(Fig 2.26) It’s taken me some time to reach this point, and I don’t expect anyone to get on board in the course of a short presentation. But if you take only *one* thing away from this admittedly motley PechaKucha, let it be this: dialogic art based on ‘the dialogic’ is rife with forces and counter forces about which I can prove very little. But I’m so convinced that this is the way this art comes into being that I can scarcely recall or even imagine ever thinking otherwise.

Marsha Bradfield: Thank you, Clark.

[Barcamp claps]

Marsha Bradfield: You’ve given us a lot to think about—and expand on. Your PechaKucha made several *claims*—is that the right word?—that we’ll need to unpack. And you’ve introduced some analytic categories for making sense of dialogic art—when, that is, this art is understood as self-managed by ‘the dialogic’, with this being one of its distinguishing characteristics.

David Rooksby: That was a great presentation, Clark, but the dialogic art—the dialogic artwork—is *where*?



Duchamp's Sister

@CassyAppadurai

JJ: CC's PechaKucha is a non-narrative fable. #diacamp

Expand

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15s



Duchamp's Sister

@CassyAppadurai

JJ: Dialogue as internal, between interlocutors who share same space-time (?) #diacamp

Expand

now



Duchamp's Sister

@CassyAppadurai

JJ: Thought is dialogic. #diacamp

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Duchamp's Sister

@CassyAppadurai

JJ: PechaKucha taps struggle internal to cult pro—the intrinsic and extrinsic value of art. #diacamp

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now

KK Lin: I’m glad you said this, David. I was wondering about this too. As, um, there’s no example, Clark, could you talk about ‘the dialogic’ with reference to your PechaKucha as a dialogic *form*?

Clark Chris: Seriously? Well, how do you think ‘the dialogic’ manifests here?

KK Lin: Please, Clark, don’t get me wrong; I enjoyed your presentation. I found the, um, *initial* definitions very clear. And the etymology of dialogic coming from ‘dia’ as in through or across, as compared with, ‘dia’ meaning *two*, is very interesting, too. I also liked your metaphors of dialogue as work and dialogue as a game. But—and maybe it’s just me—I’m still struggling to grasp this thing called ‘the dialogic’. Is it, um, a kind of counterforce of dialogue?

Clark Chris: Well, that’s a good start.

Marsha Bradfield: John? You look as though you have something pressing to say.

John Johnson: Okay, look, first let me say that listening to your PechaKucha, Clark, with all its speculative depth, was provocative. I took it as a kind of non-narrative fable. You know, there’s a theory that there are only seven stories in the world. Man versus man, man versus nature, man against God and so on and so forth.¹⁰

Maeve Cutty: ‘Man versus man’? Where are we girls in that? You know, when I teach Arthur Quiller-Couch’s plot conflicts, I talk about a ‘character versus him or *herself*’. Right, luv?

John Johnson: Okay, I stand corrected. But the point is, Clark, that your PechaKucha, ripe with personification, offered a version of a ‘character versus him or *herself*’ in the form of dialogue versus *itself*. And, as a way of complicating dialogue, of moving beyond the common view that it describes a verbal exchange between two interlocutors, your non-narrative fable is interesting for two reasons. First, it gets at the idea of dialogue occurring *internally*.

Shadworth Dyson: Well, yes, but—

John Johnson: Just let me finish this train of thought, okay? The point is, dialogue can happen *inside* something, including dialogue *itself*. And for me, this is a hop, skip and jump to thinking about the dialogue occurring inside our own heads between man and or versus himself—I’m sorry, character versus him or *herself*—in an internal struggle. So then *thought* is dialogic, right?

Shadworth Dyson: Yes, yes, of course. This is quite consistent with Bakhtin’s theory of dialogue—that as soon as we begin meditating on some issue, our inner speech assumes the form of question and response, with assertions and denials—which is to say, it unfolds as *dialogue*.¹¹

John Johnson: Okay, I agree. But I’m not sure this is the *only* way we think. Look, this gets at my interest in dialogue as an internal struggle of some kind. In the case of Clark’s PechaKucha and its discussion of ‘the dialogic’, this was framed as ‘self-management’. So ‘the dialogic’, which issues from dialogue, is a means of managing it. Right?

Clark Chris: Isn’t this clear by now? I mean, I know this is a lot to absorb, but—

John Johnson: Okay, okay, Clark. But in light of your earlier comments about arts policy and its impact on your practice, my hunch is that you’re actually tapping a broader issue here—an ongoing and internal struggle at stake in cultural production,



Duchamp's Sister

@CassyAppadurai

now

JJ: Art institutions use dialogue to extract value from artistic practice. #diacamp

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Assume the Position

@EllaandBrian

now

#diacamp CC seems in denial about the value he extracts from the institution. Cuts both ways.

Expand



Assume the Position

@EllaandBrian

6s

#diacamp Why 'management' and not 'organization'? Management implies control; organization implies arrangement.

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Duchamp's Sister

@CassyAppadurai

now

CC: Confirms he's a relativist—there is no absolute value. #diacamp

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writ large. This is the struggle between the *intrinsic* value of art, determined by the artist or arts community; and the *extrinsic* or instrumentalised value of art, designated by policy makers—which you earlier described as ‘well-intentioned but hell bent on making art accountable’, right?

Clark Chris:

John Johnson:

Something like that, but sooo—?

So, this brings me to my second point. You’ve spoken about dialogue in terms of managerial control in arts administration. You gave the example of it being instrumentalised in the form of contact days, where you, ‘the artist’, are expected to interface with the public by doing things like *workshops*. So art institutions use dialogue to extract value from your artistic practice.

Clark Chris:

John Johnson:

Yes—and?

And you’ve also said that, as an approach to contemporary art practice, dialogic art might better account for all the *labour* that goes into producing works of art. So you’re invested in this type of art as a way for you to *manage* and *extract* value from the range of dialogues that ‘cinch together your artistic practice,’ as you put it earlier.

Clark Chris:

John Johnson:

Uh-huh. Is your point coming anytime soon?

My point is, Clark, that, assuming that for you, the intrinsic value of dialogic art resides in the interplay of the dialogues composing it, I’m wondering how these two things come together in ‘the dialogic’. On the one hand, there’s dialogue as a form of *external* managerial control, right? On the other hand, there’s ‘the dialogic’ as an *internal* strategy for self-managing dialogue. The common denominator is *management*. Do you see where I’m going?

Clark Chris:

Well—first, let me acknowledge that I take David’s and KK’s point about my not using an example of dialogic art in the PechaKucha. That having been said, John, I think your comments point to a bigger issue—the *practice* of art, dialogic art, within the broader context of cultural production.

I thought I made this clear, but as I can see I didn’t, I’ll try again. By pitching ‘the dialogic’ as a way of self-managing dialogue in dialogic art, I’m not making an argument for the autonomy of this art form, as you seem to think. This self-management isn’t a form of *self-law*. My position is more pragmatic than idealistic. You’re partly right in saying that, for me, the *intrinsic* value of dialogic art resides in the interplay of the dialogues composing it. But this is only partly right when it presupposes that this *intrinsic* value is something independent of art’s broader *extrinsic* or instrumentalised value. This autonomy is a *fiction*. Yes, this is very much a fiction, as far as I’m concerned—and, I think, as far as we all should be concerned. As I’ve said, dialogue is another name for *relativity*; more simply put, *nothing* has meaning in isolation because nothing exists *in isolation*. So when it comes to the self-management of dialogic art relative to arts management in general, my point is really that there is no cultural production *without* management.^{12*} And the sooner we accept this, the sooner we can begin the important work of *creating* managerial modes of self-organisation that respond, both critically and artistically, to their broader social, cultural and political context.



Duchamp's Sister

@CassyAppadurai

CC: DA = a way of working within norms of cult pro while modeling alternatives. #diacamp

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now




Duchamp's Sister

@CassyAppadurai

CC: DA could be institutional critique but is not reducible to this. #diacamp

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now



Duchamp's Sister

@CassyAppadurai

CC: DA is a practice that can be purposed to a range of ends. #diacamp

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now

John Johnson: Okay. I can accept that. And it’s interesting. This means, then, that, in addition to self-managing dialogue, ‘the dialogic’ is also a kind of *counter*-managerial scheme—a kind of antidote to audit culture more generally. Right?

Clark Chris: No. There is no *antidote* to audit culture—but there are ways of negotiating it that are *more* creative, *more* artistic. I would say these are better choices than artistic practice that either capitulates to arts policy, audit culture or otherwise, or burns itself out trying to fight it, because then the struggle becomes an end in itself! I’m convinced that dialogic art—motored by ‘the dialogic’—is a way of working within the current regime while insisting that it could and should be otherwise, by modelling alternative ways of *accounting* for all the dialogues—or at least a broader range of dialogues—as labour that composes this art form. But, of course, that’s just *my* opinion.

David Rooksby: And your opinion is based on—what, exactly? We’re still waiting for an example of a dialogic artwork!

John Johnson: Point taken, David. But I think Clark is really talking about *institutional critique*.

Clark Chris: I could, of course, have discussed dialogic art in this way, which is where you seem hell bent on dragging it, John. But, instead, I chose to take up what is, to me, the more interesting and challenging question of ‘What is dialogic art?’ from the perspective of ‘the dialogic’. Understanding this—and I know it’s *not* an easy concept—but, *really*, getting this, as the central operating principle of dialogic art, is more important, as far as I’m concerned, than suggesting its potential application—at least for our immediate purposes here.

David Rooksby: So you’re saying we’re trying to put the cart before the horse.

Clark Chris: Yes! Exactly! Finally! Look, John, dialogic art *could* be a form of institutional critique—but this is only *one* possible application or development. As art about labour, it’s *more* than institutional critique—obviously! Why squelch dialogic art’s dialogic potential by pigeonholing it in this way?


John Johnson: Okay—but what is ‘labour’ if not a pigeonhole?

Clark Chris: Well, yes, all right—assuming this hole can hold that many pigeons, making it more like a giant *aviary*. But my point, really, is that I’ve chosen to approach dialogic art as a self-management system composed of ‘dialogic tactics’ underpinned by a ‘dialogic strategy’ and administered by ‘the dialogic disposition’. These aspects or expressions of ‘the dialogic’ are a way of pitching dialogic art as something that can be inhabited and deployed to *many* ends. But again, of course, that’s just *my* opinion. We’re sure to hear other responses to the question, ‘What is dialogic art?’ over the course of the day.

Ella Stone: *Bien sûr!* You’re speaking of form as content, are you not?

Clark Chris: In a manner of speaking, ‘yes’.

Shadworth Dyson: Ah ha! Well, then, about the PechaKucha as a dialogic form, Clark, I believe you expressed something to the effect that, by ‘dialogue’ you mean a form of



Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai 5s

SD: What's the relation between the PechaKucha's verbal and visual aspects? #diacamp

Expand



Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai 8s

CC: Verbal and visual relation in PechaKucha is eg of 'dialogic tactic'. #diacamp

Expand Reply Delete Favorite



Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai now

AL: CC's post-PechaKucha comments enact 'the dialogic', tighten the relation between verbal and visual. #diacamp

Expand Reply Delete Favorite

Clark Chris:

Shadworth Dyson:

Chris Clark:

Shadworth Dyson:

Clark Chris:

Anne Lang:

Clark Chris:

Anne Lang:

communication that alternates between two or more interlocutors, whose utterances—verbal, visual, haptic and others—issue across from or perhaps in opposition to each other as they converse.

Uh-huh. And *so*?

So I suppose I have a rather obvious question, vis-à-vis the coupling of the *visual* and *verbal* in your presentation, which is to ask you to say something about how your visual utterances dialogue with your verbal ones and vice versa.

The slides and the commentary? Oh, well, it's quite simple, really. I searched Google Image for 'the dialogic' and these visuals came back. It didn't much matter what images went with what commentary. But I'm pleased, Shadworth, that you clocked *this* dialogue. It means my PechaKucha's dialogic tactic made you think about this relation. This may not have happened if, for instance, the visuals had been illustrative in a more straightforward way, as is so often—too often, really—the case.

Yes, well, to this extent, this tactic *was* effective. However, Clark, you also distinguished between 'dialogic' as an adjective meaning 'relating to or in the form of dialogue' and 'the dialogic' as something that has much in common with dialogue but is also different, something that goes *beyond* it, something that is *more*—more dialogue than dialogue, itself. So vis-à-vis the interplay between the verbal and the visual utterances in your presentation, is this a dialogic *relation* or an instance of '*the dialogic*'?

It's a dialogic relation, *obviously*. It's clearly too loose for 'the dialogic'. 'The dialogic' would pick up the slack by binding the dialogue's content and form together more tightly.

You know, what you're saying is really interesting, Clark. Like Shadworth, I wondered about the visual and the verbal in your PechaKucha. And, you know, I assumed it was intentional. And, in light of what you and Marsha said about the barcamp presentations being more like *primers* than self-contained arguments, I took your PechaKucha as a really provocative puzzle. *Sooo*, the questions I was asking myself during your presentation were things like, 'What is the relation between the verbal and visual here?' and 'What are the rules of this game?'.

All right.

But your *post*-PechaKucha comments have sort of shifted my sense of the PechaKucha proper. You know, they've *done* something to my understanding. I mean, yes, you've given us the missing piece of the puzzle by explaining how the verbal and visual interrelate. And, your comments have achieved a really good instance of 'the dialogic' in the process, in keeping with your definition, I think. Haven't they, you know, *tightened* the relation between the PechaKucha's content and form? I mean, we now know the interplay between the verbal and the visual is staked on a particular relation. The Google Image connection. As a kind of *revelation*, it's sort of like your *post*-PechaKucha comments are in dialogue with your PechaKucha proper. Thoughts on this?



Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai

now

JJ: AL is discursively producing CC's PechaKucha—is this discussion another dialogue in the artwork? #diacamp

Expand Reply Delete Favorite



Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai

now

JJ: What 'counts' as the practice of dialogic art? What 'counts' as a DAW? More boundary issues. #diacamp

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Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai

7s

Questions arise about the role discursive production plays in DA. #diacamp

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Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai

5s

AL: Wants to include an artwork's discursive production in the artwork's ontology. #diacamp

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John Johnson:

Okay, but didn't you say, Anne, that your PhD research concerns the *discursive* production of art? Right? And isn't that what you're doing right now—performing your own practice-based research on Clark's PechaKucha?

Clark Chris:

Hold on! Who said anything about the PechaKucha being 'art'?

John Johnson:

Well, you did, actually.

Clark Chris:

It was just a way to prime discussion about the difference between dialogue and 'the dialogic'. I thought that was clear.

John Johnson:

But you're in no position to argue this point! Look, you yourself identified as an artist interested in dialogic art as an expanded theory of the artwork. You *valorised* it as an approach that takes into consideration and aims to *better* account for all labour that cinches together your artistic practice.

Clark Chris:

And your point is?

John Johnson:

My point is, aren't you at work right now?

Clark Chris:

Yes, yes—all right. I see your point, John. I suppose you're really asking about the *scope* of dialogic art practice. What *counts* as practice? This goes back to Maeve's questions about how we're defining 'dialogue' in dialogic art—what counts as a dialogue in the practice of this art? What are the *boundaries* of 'a dialogic art'?

David Rooksby:

But you have yet to answer the question, Clark. Is your PechaKucha a dialogic artwork? Yes or no?

Clark Chris:

I'm not answering your question.

David Rooksby:

Then you're avoiding it.

Anne Lang:

You know, maybe Clark can't *answer* this question, but I can. *Of course*, this PechaKucha is a dialogic artwork. But it only really achieves this status *retrospectively*, in light of Clark's comments regarding the visual-verbal relation. And I sort of think that's what makes it interesting. And, really, aren't these comments a way of putting the PechaKucha in dialogue with itself?

John Johnson:

Seriously? Does this then mean we should take this entire discussion—maybe even the entire barcamp—as constitutive of a dialogic work of art?

Anne Lang:

You know—I think we should!

John Johnson:

Okay, look—that would make me and you and everyone else here *co-authors*! Well, wouldn't it? But that's not a role I'm willing to accept. Quite aside from the fact I was never consulted about participating in this barcamp as an artistic collaboration, dialogic art is going to have to struggle *much* harder for its own legitimacy and recognition than this, right? My point is, Anne, if you're saying an artwork's artistic value resides in its *discursive production*, I would counter that *anything* can be discursively produced as art—and I, for one, refuse to reduce dialogic art back to *talk*. That would be retarding our discussion! It would mean that dialogue is basically a linguistic exchange between two or more interlocutors. I thought we'd moved beyond that!

Anne Lang:

That's not what I'm saying and I think you know it, John. What I'm really wondering is how we might broaden our sense of a dialogic artwork to *include* its discursive production. You know, listening to Allison's discussion of Kester's dialogical art, I sensed he might be fetishising the dialogue occurring



Duchamp's Sister

@CassyAppadurai

now

CC: Imagines DA could produce something other than an artwork.
#diacamp

Expand Reply Delete Favorite



Phil Hind

@PhilHind1

25s

#dialogic There are many ways that artworks are defined, including being nominated, as such, by an institution.

Expand



Assume the Position

@EllaandBrian

now

#diacamp Re above: How much control does an artwork have over its reception, interpretation, appropriation? Very little.

Expand Reply Delete Favorite



Duchamp's Sister

@CassyAppadurai

5s

MB: The dialogic is a bond or glue—a way of bundling dialogues together. #diacamp

Expand



What is dialogic art

@DialogicArt

now

#diacamp Perhaps a Hegelian idea lurking here,

Expand



What is dialogic art

@DialogicArt

19s

eg 'speech' that is dialogue is actually the synthesis of the two or more contributions.

Expand Reply Delete Favorite

in the artwork. I mean, it's a kind of overcorrection—he's sort of reacting against the tradition of dialogue occurring *about* the artwork, after it's been materially achieved. But, really, these things don't have such clean edges—or at least not in *my* sense of dialogic art, nascent as it is. And if, sort of, in keeping with Clark's argument, dialogic art aims to account for a *wider range* of the dialogues that compose it, shouldn't this include both those in an artwork proper and those prompted by this artwork? You know?

Clark Chris: But why fetishise the *artwork*? I like the idea of dialogic art manifesting as *something else*. I think 'the dialogic' might help this art form to concoct itself into another kind of assemblage—and I would wager this PechaKucha could be a case in point.

John Johnson: Okay—*because*?

Clark Chris: *Because* we're having this debate! Isn't that much *obvious*? I wasn't at all certain the PechaKucha *was* an artwork prior to this discussion—and I'm still not. But it's kept us locked in an exchange over its legitimacy long enough to convince me that some kind of 'dialogic bonus' has been achieved. Earlier, I likened this to 'a point scored in a game as opposed to a winning score'. Well, we've both scored points in this dialogue, John—you, me and Anne, too. The PechaKucha—whatever it is—*catalysed* our discussion. And the game is still in play.

Marsha Bradfield: I'm not quite sure why, but what you're saying reminds me—a couple of years ago I worked on a project that involved a structure held together with 30,000 cable ties¹³—lots of pulling, tightening and tying off. You've got me thinking, Clark, about *ties*, *cords* and other mechanisms for *holding* dialogic art together—'the dialogic' as some kind of bond, or glue.

Anne Lang: Sort of a bungee cord that could be stretched and clipped in response to circumstance?

Allison Jones: So where does this leave us—beyond being confused about the scope of dialogic art and where to draw the boundaries around dialogic artworks? If you two, John and Clark, can agree to disagree, then we can move on. I think we've got as much out of this discussion as we're going to. Can we move on?

Anne Lang: A point of clarification, and here I'm doffing my *TheJargonBuster* hat: would this agreement be an instance of 'the dialogic bonus'? And if so, wouldn't it be akin to a *cessation* of 'the dialogic'?

Shadworth Dyson: Most interesting, yes, not unlike the pause between turns in dialogue, only, in this case, we're moving onto a new topic of discussion, though we're bound to return to 'the dialogic bonus' in time.

Allison Jones: How about responding to the tweet, Clark? Could you say something about the proposition that, 'Perhaps there is a Hegelian idea lurking here, e.g. the "speech" that is dialogue is actually the synthesis of the two or more contributions?' I think a response to that could be quite useful to Marsha and me in our research.

Clark Chris: Well, I can broach this through 'the dialogic disposition'. I can say this artistic sensibility resides with the dialogic artist and finds embodiment in what he or



Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai

now

AJ aims to differentiate 'dialogic' from 'dialectic'. #diacamp

Expand



Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai

10s

JJ: Key parallel—'negative dialectics' = thought against thought,

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Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai

38s

while 'the dialogic' as negative dialogue = dialogue against dialogue. #diacamp

Expand



What is dialogic art @DialogicArt

now

#diacamp If existence is dialogic, can anything ever be monologic?

Expand Reply Delete Favorite



What is dialogic art @DialogicArt

3s

#diacamp Monologism and dialogism are as much points of view as they are things that

Expand



What is dialogic art @DialogicArt

11s

exist in the world.

Expand Reply Delete Favorite



Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai

4s

SD: Even the monologic is dialogic! #diacamp

Expand

David Rooksby:

Allison Jones:

John Johnson:

Clark Chris:

Shadworth Dyson:

Allison Jones:

Shadworth Dyson:

she produces. The point about this way of working is it’s characterised by an interest in how it is that something can be *both* a synthesis on the one hand and a combination of things on the other. But how, Allison, would you address this tweet?

So, basically, it’s another instance of dialogic art being and/also instead of either/or. But I have to say—Allison, this is your tweet, right?

Well, yes, I tweeted it but the question really came from my supervisor, Mary Anne Francis, and I was sort of interested in how Clark might respond. You know, I think it’s actually very difficult to address this conclusively. I mean, there *is* a sort of Hegelian idea lurking here, e.g. the ‘speech’ that is dialogue is actually the synthesis of two or more contributions—assuming, that is, that we’re approaching dialogue via *dialectics*. I mean, we know that dialectics is propelled by synthesis, and that synthesis is a machine for thought that is both a virtue and a vice. I’m reminded of Theodor Adorno’s critique of dialectics via *negative* dialectics. You know, as an alternative, negative dialectics is an attempt to think thought against thought¹⁴—or at least philosophy based on dialectics against itself so as to transcend its *own* limits. You know?

Okay, look, maybe there’s a parallel here. Maybe we can think of ‘the dialogic’ as the negative of dialogue. If Adorno’s negative dialectics is a way for dialectics to think thought against itself so as to transcend its limits, then ‘the dialogic’ could be a means of dialogue dialoguing with and against itself in order to transcend its own limits. Right?

I would agree with that. There’s something about it that synchs with a sense of ‘the dialogic’ as a means of self-managing the dialogue in dialogic art.

I can certainly appreciate this connection between negative dialectics and ‘the dialogic’ as one way of grasping the telos of dialogic art, wherein ‘the dialogic’ helps us to understand what dialogue is and could perhaps be. But now, returning to the distinction between ‘dialogue’ and ‘dialectic’, Bakhtin would surely agree with your view, Allison, in that he tells us that ‘dialectics is the abstract product of dialogue’,¹⁵ and critiques dialectics on the grounds that it *flattens* or *expunges* everything that dialogue, on his understanding, holds dear—which is to say, the distinct voices, accents and positions.¹⁶

But Shadworth, don’t you think there’s also a case to be made for something *like* dialectical synthesis occurring in the act of response as I fold the preceding question or statement—the utterance—into mine? I mean, isn’t there room for this view?

Yes, well, of course, Allison, when the dialectic’s synthesis is viewed as monological—which is to say, of course, having only one meaning—but that’s only *one* perspective. From a *dialogic* angle, we perceive the synthesis of the utterance as *micro*-dialogic, or a range of voices past and present, whilst for Bakhtin, the form of dialectics is indicative of a *drive*, or *will*, to silence these voices by having the last word—or, differently put, *even* the monologic is dialogic, which is precisely the axis of Bakhtin’s meditations on dialogue.



What is dialogic art @DialogicArt

#diacamp See also Adorno's difficult prose style as eg of creative form that is ideologically charged.

Expand Reply Delete Favorite

4s



Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai

SD: A dialogic approach holds that existence is centrifugal in contrast to centripetal. #diacamp

Expand Reply Delete Favorite

8s



Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai

Difficult to be inside a DAW and theorise it. #diacamp

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now



Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai

CC's categories—dialogues, dialogic, the dialogic,

Expand

now



Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai

dialogic bonus, dialogic disposition, dialogic strategies, dialogic tactics. #diacamp

Expand

19s

And this is a *crucial* point because the very *telos* of dialogic forms, in my opinion, is that they draw out the dialogue among their constituent parts. If you will recall Clark’s theory of a ‘dialogic disposition’—the counterforce to which would surely be a ‘dialectical disposition’—attending to the ways in which these dispositions find expression in dialogic art is what makes formal conventions the *loadstone* of Bakhtin’s philosophy of art, and of communication, such as when he speaks of ‘form-shaping ideology’, where forms *always* express a worldview through their organisation and representation of content.¹⁷ The ideology of a dialectic form or disposition is *totalitarian*—at least in theory, and in opposition to a dialogical approach, which aims to draw out existence as *centrifugal*, rather than centripetal.

Marsha Bradfield: I think it’s difficult to know what this means without exploring it through an example of dialogic art—preferably one that we’re not *literally* producing in some way, as in the case of our discussion of Clark’s PechaKucha. I like the idea of this being an instance of dialogic art without necessarily being an artwork. But I’m not sure it’s the best example for taking up either Bakhtin’s theory of form-shaping ideology or the analytical categories that Clark proposed. I can’t really articulate why, beyond saying that I need some distance from the PechaKucha as a dialogic form—some time to reflect on what we’ve discussed and what it means for dialogic art, more broadly.

KK Lin: I agree. This being the case, Marsha and Allison, do you think this would, um, be a good time to move into my contribution? I’ll be proposing a photo-based example of a dialogic artwork, if that’s okay.

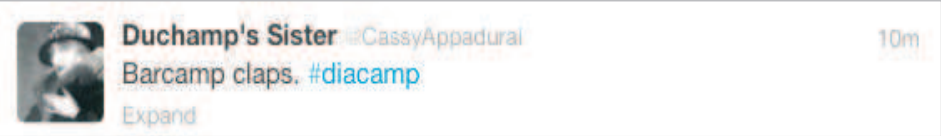
David Rooksby: At long last! We’ve been talking about ‘Art’ today like it’s some guy named ‘Arthur’ we know on a nickname-basis. Dialogic ‘Art’ this and dialogic ‘Art’ that! Come on, people. Enough with the theory; let’s see some examples!

Marsha Bradfield: I’m wondering, KK, if we might bear in mind Clark’s analytical categories when considering your example? Clark, could you remind us what these include?

Clark Chris: Well, there are dialogues, of course, and dialogic as opposed to ‘the dialogic’, and then there’s ‘the dialogic bonus’, ‘the dialogic disposition’, ‘dialogic strategies’ and ‘dialogic tactics’.

Anne Lang: You know, it’s practically a micro-theory of dialogic art that has theorised about itself through the PechaKucha as artistic practice. I have one final thought—I mean one thought to express before we move on, as it relates to David’s enthusiasm for examples. This PechaKucha sort of recalls for me an interview I read with philosopher of art Jonathan Dronsfield, where he was taken to task for not *illustrating* his theory with an example. And he said something like, when the only instance of an artwork or art practice being theorised is *itself*, an artwork *can* theorise without examples. So really, theory can also theorise itself as art practice.¹⁸

Marsha Bradfield: Hold onto that thought, Anne. Before turning to KK’s example, I want to thank Clark *again* for his PechaKucha. I think his proposition that dialogic art is distinguished from other dialogue-based contemporary art practice by ‘the dialogic’ is an important steppingstone in our own thinking about what this



art *is* and could *be*. I’m hoping very much that we’ll examine ‘the dialogic’ over the course of the day and better understand its significance. Could we thank Clark again for his contribution with a second round of applause?

[Barcamp claps.]

^{1*} Chris Smith and Linden Reilly, ‘What Work Does the Artwork Do? A Question for Art’, *Journal of Visual Arts Practice* 6, no.1 (May 2007): 5–12. Clark Chris’s concern with dialogic art as labour accords with Smith and Reilly’s interest in the question, ‘What work does the artwork do?’, which they argue is more productive than asking, ‘What is art?’. Smith and Reilly note that an emphasis on labour in contrast to meaning is especially useful for practitioners of art, who may be more immediately concerned with the role and function of their art practice than with the categorisation of this practice and its outcomes, per se.

^{2*} PechaKucha 20x20’, PechaKucha Foundation, <http://www.pecha-kucha.org/what> (accessed June 10, 2011).

^{3*} Michael Holquist, *Dialogism: Bakhtin and his World*, 2nd ed. (London and New York: Routledge, 1990). The theory of dialogue explored here is broadly informed by Holquist’s reading of Mikhail Bakhtin’s notion of ‘dialogism’. Ideas touched on in the PechaKucha are expanded in subsequent footnotes. It is important to note with Holquist that ‘dialogism’ is not a term that Bakhtin himself used. Nor, interestingly enough, was this term evoked in this barcamp. For Holquist, ‘dialogism’ provides a way of conceptualising Bakhtin’s meditations on dialogue ‘as a unity without losing site of the dynamic heterogeneity of his achievements’, 15.

^{4*} Oxford English Dictionary, s.v. ‘dialogue’.

^{5*} Ibid.

^{6*} Ibid.

^{7*} Holquist, *Dialogism*, 20–21. Holquist notes that Bakhtin’s philosophy of dialogism embraces Einstein’s theory of relativity as a way of complicating traditional notions of meaning. Both Bakhtin and Einstein grasp meaning as relative in the sense it depends on comparison: comparing two or more bodies in the same frame. These bodies are together and apart—they exist in proximity and simultaneously but occupy their own specific space. Core to Bakhtin’s sense of relativity is the ‘observer’s’ role as he or she grasps the relation between bodies. In Bakhtin’s view, the observer is implicated in this relation through more than his or her perception. The observer’s perspective also informs his or her sense of the relation, owing to this being perceived from his or her own unique and situated place in the world. According to Holquist, for Bakhtin, ‘Conceiving being dialogical means that reality is always experienced, not just perceived, and further that it is experienced from a particular position. Bakhtin conceives that position in kinetic terms as a situation, an event, the event of being self’.

^{8*} Sevda Çalışkan, ‘Ethical Aesthetics/Aesthetic Ethics: The Case of Bakhtin,’ *Journal of Arts and Sciences*, Çankaya Üniversitesi Fen-edebiyat Fakültesi, 5 (May 2006) jas.cankaya.edu.tr/gecmisYayinlar/yayinlar/jas5/01-sevda.pdf (accessed June 10, 2009). Sevda argues that two principles guide Bakhtin’s thinking: ‘the primacy of the particular over the general, and the systematic rejection of unity in favor of plurality’. For Bakhtin, plurality is variously conceived, but central is the relation is between self and other. For discussion of self-other relations, where Bakhtin argues the other consummates the self, see, for example, M. M. Bakhtin, *Art and Answerability*, eds. Michael Holquist and Vadim Liapunov (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990), 101–112.

^{9*} Holquist, *Dialogism*, 49. Holquist argues that Bakhtin’s philosophy of dialogism holds that life is expression. Holquist writes that ‘Expression means to make meaning, and meaning comes through the medium of signs. This is true at all levels of existence: something exists only if it means. . . . Anything that means is a sign, and since there is nothing that may not function as a sign, everything has the potential to mean.’ Language, in other words, models existence in dialogism; it underpins both the epistemic and ontological aspects of Bakhtin’s scholarship, both his sociolinguistics and philosophy of language.

^{10*} Although Arthur Quiller-Couch is often attributed with identifying the seven basic plot lines in literary theory, I cannot find any evidence of this in his body of criticism or fiction. Having consulted librarians of the British Library without success, I resign myself to quoting one of the many online sources that pays tribute to Quiller-Couch’s important contribution without citing the exact source of his thinking. Joyce Fetterall, ‘All the Plots in the World,’ Dragon Writing Prompts <http://dragonwritingprompts.blogspot.com/2006/12/23/all-the-plots-in-the-world/> (accessed May 23, 2012).

^{11*} Anne Shukman, ed., *Bakhtin School Papers* (No Publisher: 1983), 119.

¹²*Critical Practice Research Cluster, ‘Critical Practice’, Critical Practice Chelsea, <http://www.criticalpracticechelsea.org> (accessed March 10, 2012). The necessary organisation of cultural production is one of Critical Practice Research Cluster’s central concerns. As the cluster’s wiki homepage notes, ‘All art is organised, so we are trying to be sensitive to issues of governance. Governance emerges whenever there is a deliberate organisation of interactions between people, we are striving to be an “open” organisation, and to make all decisions, processes and production, accessible and transparent’.

¹³This project was *PARADE*, facilitated by Critical Practice Research Cluster. See Phil Hind’s barcamp contribution in this collation for further discussion of this project and the cluster’s research.

¹⁴Theodor Adorno, *Negative Dialectics* (London: Continuum, 2007), 395. Adorno defines ‘negative dialectics’ as follows: ‘If negative dialectics calls for the self-reflection of thinking, the tangible implication is that if thinking is to be true—if it is to be true today, in any case—it must also be a thinking against itself. If thought is not measured by the extremity that eludes the concept, it is from the outset in the nature of the musical accompaniment with which the SS liked to drown out the screams of its victims’.

¹⁵M. M. Bakhtin, *Problems with Dostoevsky’s Poetics*, (University of Minnesota Press, 1984), 293.

¹⁶M. M. Bakhtin, *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*, eds. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist, (Austin: University of Texas Press), 147. See also *Problems* 183.

¹⁷Bakhtin, *Problems*, 83.

¹⁸Jonathan Dronsfield, ‘An Exchange with Jack Rancière’, Sophie Berrebi, Jonathan Dronsfield, Jack Rancière and Stephen Wright, *Art&Research* 2, no.1 (Summer 2008) <http://www.artandresearch.org.uk/v2n1/jrexchange.html> (accessed June 10, 2011).

10:48



Fig. 3.0



Fig. 3.1

- Marsha Bradfield:

KK, the remote?
- KK Lin:

Yes, thanks. And many thanks, Marsha and Allison, for organising this barcamp.
- Marsha Bradfield:

Could you introduce yourself and say what brings you here today?
- KK Lin:

Of course. I'm doing my MA at Chelsea and my dissertation is on photography—spatiotemporal relations in still images. I'm here because I've been thinking about dialogic art from the perspective of *representation*. I'll, um, be proposing a photo-based post-conceptual artwork that demonstrates my sense of a dialogic approach. I am, of course, open to your thoughts, opinions and suggestions.
- I'm not sure how many of you are familiar with Pierre Huyghe's *Chantier Barbès-Rochechouart* (Fig 3.0), which translates as *The Permanent Construction Site*. It was made in the mid-1990s and documents an intervention.¹ As you can see from the slide, there is a billboard in the foreground that shows workers labouring on a construction site, and in the background, in the shadow of the sign, workers labour on what appears, um, to be the same site. So *Chantier Barbès-Rochechouart* shows a sign and a site in an image within an image. It's a mimetic scheme that seems to freeze-frame two microseconds in a building project that must have taken months, if not years—if you see what I mean.
- Clark Chris:

At *last*! Someone who shares my sense of *labour* as a core concern of dialogic art.



Fig. 3.2

- 

Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai

KL: Concerned with representation of labour in Huyghe's 'Chantier Barbès- Rochechouart' (CBR). #diacamp

Expand Reply Delete Favorite

now
- 

Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai

KL: Quotes NB's discussion of CBR. #diacamp

Expand Reply Delete Favorite

now
- 

Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai

NB considers Huyghe's interest in human labour as flows, connections, tools. #diacamp

Expand Reply Delete Favorite

now
- 

The Wisemans @TheWisemans

#diacamp What distinguishes an 'ethical conception of form' Aren't all forms ethical?

Expand Reply Delete Favorite

now

KK Lin:

I do think there's an overlap with my interest in the *representation* of labour in Huyghe's artwork. And I'll try taking this up by way of your analytic categories, Clark. But first, maybe I should say something about my relationship with this image—okay?

Um, I came across it in the recycling bin at college. It was someone else's printout, discarded for whatever reason, and it captured my imagination. So I pinned it to my studio wall and let it watch me work for several weeks before I went online to find out more (Fig. 3.2). My first hit was an essay by Nicolas Bourriaud. I'd like to read you a short excerpt, if I may. So, um, Bourriaud writes:

Pierre Huyghe's strength lies in his understanding of the fact that an image always comes with baggage. This is probably what makes his work so important today, at a time when commercial signals are proliferating in place of works, closed-loop communication is coming to replace culture, images have become masks for universal media ventriloquism and it's always power that does the talking . . . [*Chantier Barbès-Rochechouart* (A Permanent Construction Site)], the title of one of Huyghe's works, could apply to them all. The image of the construction site actually contains the essential part of what we find in his universe: the fleeting, fragile nature of human labour, the relationships of which it is composed, a complex picture of the flows, connections and tools that it requires and, more generally, an ethical conception of form, never considered as a finished product, but rather as the fruit of a slow elaboration.²

This passage strikes me as interesting, and perhaps you'll agree, for many reasons. To begin with, I'm thinking that Bourriaud's reflections might offer insight into what we might call, in light of Clark's presentation, Huyghe's *dialogic* disposition—that is, assuming Huyghe qualifies as a dialogic artist, or at least an artist with dialogic *tendencies*. I'm certainly open to input on that but, based on the example of *Chantier Barbès-Rochechouart*, I'm, um, thinking—he does? Bourriaud alludes to Huyghe's interest in 'flows, connections and tools' of human labour in relation to an 'ethical conception of form'. So I guess I'm wanting to consider how these things find *embodiment* in *Chantier Barbès-Rochechouart*—how they come together into some kind of representation that show their interdependence? Do you see what I mean? I *think* this goes back to what Shadworth was saying about dialogic forms, to which I would suggest adding *compositions*, which then draw out the dialogue among their constituent parts, as I understood Shadworth to say. Is that accurate, Shadworth?

Shadworth Dyson: Yes, well, that's certainly—

KK Lin: Let's see, where was I? Oh, right. Oh, I'm really sorry, Shadworth—you were starting to say something and I interrupted.

Shadworth Dyson: Quite all right, KK. Please do go on.

KK Lin: Thanks. I mean, sorry. Okay, to pick up—Clark, I also liked what you were saying about dialogic art *demystifying* art practice by accounting for all the labour that goes into its realisation.



Duchamp's Sister

@CassyAppadurai

PH: Ongoing concerns about infinite regress and bounding DAWs.
#diacamp

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now



Duchamp's Sister

@CassyAppadurai

KL: Reflexivity may be a dialogic strategy (?) #diacamp

Expand Reply Delete Favorite

now



TheJargonBuster

@TheJargonBuster1

#diacamp Reflexivity = self-reference, eg: 'This sentence is written in English'.
Expand

now



Duchamp's Sister

@CassyAppadurai

KL: Dialogic bonus = the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.
#diacamp

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now



Shadworth Dyson

@ShadworthDyson

#diacamp Juliet Maccannell Flower says MMB preoccupied with 'the present' as well as making 'present the past'.
Expand Reply Delete Favorite

42s




TheJargonBuster

@TheJargonBuster1

#diacamp Who or what is 'MMB?'
Expand

now



Shadworth Dyson

@ShadworthDyson

#diacamp MMB is 'Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin'. Marsha's initials are also MB.
Expand Reply Delete Favorite

41s



Duchamp's Sister

@CassyAppadurai

KL: Are the temporalities in dialogue in CBR? #diacamp

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now

Phil Hind: 'All the labour'. We've heard this phrase several times today and, while I'm broadly sympathetic to your interest in catching and auditing the interdependence of various labours, KK and Clark, the truth is, and David and I have flagged our concern, that this could give way to infinite regress.

KK Lin: Yes, Phil, I'm glad you've brought this up. I've been thinking about it, too. Maybe 'account for' isn't the best way of explaining this. Do you think, perhaps, 'evoke' would be better? I'll try and take up this concern in a bit. But, to return to Clark's analytic categories, looking at the *Chantier Barbès-Rochechouart*, and thinking about Clark's idea of 'the dialogic bonus', I'm wondering if the labour of this image—the labour carried out through its *representational scheme*—could be described as *reflexivity*. I mean, could the artwork be seen as bending back on itself? I've been thinking about this self-reference unfolding across the billboard image of the construction site, which I'll call the *historical image*, as it's embedded in a more *contemporary* one. And it occurs to me—though I'm not really sure about this, it's really just a thought—but it occurs to me that, maybe, in the case of *Chantier Barbès-Rochechouart*, the 'dialogic bonus' is another way of saying 'the whole is greater than the sum of its parts', and the *excess*, if you see what I mean, is realised through the artwork's *reflexivity*. If I'm right about this, the historical image would be a *part* in the whole/part relation and the more contemporary image would be the *whole*. And the significance of the artwork would be irreducible to either, in isolation from each other. Is this making any sense?

Shadworth Dyson: Yes, the historical image and the contemporary one—in dialogue—the dialogic bonus'. Very interesting idea, yes.

Marsha Bradfield: Shadworth?

Shadworth Dyson: I don't wish to hold you up, KK so I'll tweet my comment. This will be my first tweet.

KK Lin: Thanks for that. So, where was I? Right. When it comes to the reflexivity that organises *Chantier Barbès-Rochechouart*, I think the nested image implies the passage of time in the construction process. And, maybe it's just me, but the title of the artwork in translation—*The Permanent Construction Site*, I mean—prompts me to think *symbolically*. I'm thinking this building-in-process is maybe a kind of proxy—do you think?

John Johnson: Well—

KK Lin: *Well*, um, what I mean is, it could be a proxy for the *ongoing production* of the artwork through its *interpretation*. So, what I'm trying to say, I hope clearly, is that there's production occurring as the image is contextualised and re-contextualised through its circulation and encounter. Does that make sense?


Maybe I should clarify a bit? I guess I'm wondering, um, about the temporalities in *Chantier Barbès-Rochechouart* being 'in dialogue'. And what would this mean for our sense of dialogic art? Well, first, I think there is the *past* of the historical image. Then, there's the *contemporaneity* of Huyghe's artwork overall, which is formally fixed in time and space. I spoke of this earlier with reference to the *contemporary image*. And finally, there's the



TheJargonBuster @TheJargonBuster1 9s

#diacamp Figurative dialogue describes relation between inanimate objects, eg table and chair, when described as in dialogic relation.


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What is dialogic art @DialogicArt now

#diacamp BU: Dialogic art is a process- based approach, shows us the artwork's authorial process.

Expand



What is dialogic art @DialogicArt now

#diacamp But does CBR show its authorial process or a generic process of construction?

Expand



Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai 11s

KL: Interested in distributed authorship in DA and how authors author DAWs in overlapping ways. #diacamp

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Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai 4s

JJ: Where is the intersubjective exchange in CBR? #diacamp

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John Johnson:

artwork in the *present*—that is, made present to *me* through my encounter. I’m thinking that, as a dialogic artwork, *Chantier Barbès-Rochechouart* makes the dialogue between the temporalities of the building process—by which I mean the labour both *in* and *of* the artwork—obvious enough, *explicit* enough, that it becomes the *focus* here. And my acid test for this explicitness is that it makes me wonder about the ethical, political and artistic issues at stake in the construction of the artwork—it’s authorial becoming. Is this making any sense?

Anne Lang:

Yes, okay, maybe. But, look, are you sure it’s the *artwork* that makes you wonder about these things? Or does this interest stem from Bourriaud’s *discussion* of Huyghe’s art practice?

Does it matter? Or, is what’s important about KK’s analysis that she seems to be saying that dialogic art, based on the example of *Chantier Barbès-Rochechouart*, is a *process-based* approach, yes?

KK Lin:

I’m sorry, Anne, I don’t mean to be argumentative, but isn’t that a bit like saying that *all* art is dialogic? I mean, it’s true that all art is process-based, but isn’t the question—or aren’t the questions—‘How?’ and ‘To what ends?’

Brian Updike:

If I may come in on this. I think that by a ‘process-based approach’, we means one that *shows* us an artwork’s authorial process. This is in contrast with other approaches that *conceal* this process, yes? [Anne is nodding and I’ll take that as a, ‘Yes’.] Think of Warhol’s Brillo cartons, KK. Of course, the institution of art, and especially its mechanisms of attribution, ensure that we *know* that Warhol authored these cartons. But there is very little in the artwork itself that points to this fact and there’s nothing that indicates *how* it was produced—which is why Warhol’s Brillo cartons can pass as real ones.³

KK Lin:

So in the case of dialogic art, um, would this process-based approach mean drawing attention to the dialogues that author the artwork? I think that’s what we’re seeing in *Chantier Barbès-Rochechouart*’s representational scheme—spread across its title and images. And, um, it prompts me to wonder how the artist—Huyghe, I mean—the construction workers and also those encountering this artwork, this *dialogic* artwork, *all* author it in distinct but maybe also overlapping ways? Do you know what I mean? So, what I’m interested in is *how* authorship is distributed here, and *how* the artwork makes this distribution explicit through its representational scheme.

John Johnson:

Right, okay. But, look, before we discuss authorship, KK, I have a more basic concern. First, let me say that, as the barcamp’s designated *agent provocateur*, it’s my job to niggle a little—all right? Okay, good.

So, I have some questions about your analysis of *Chantier Barbès-Rochechouart*’s. Okay, you’ll recall that Marsha said something to the effect that she’s *especially* interested in dialogic forms that are predisposed to representing a range of authorial relations constellated through the authors’ intersubjective exchange *in* and *as* this type of art, right? Look, this being the case, how does intersubjective exchange *feature* in *Chantier Barbès-Rochechouart*?




TheJargonBuster @TheJargonBuste1

#diacamp Intersubjective exchange is literal dialogue.

Expand

now




Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai

PH: Defines intersubjectivity as a variety of relations between perspectives. #diacamp

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6s



Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai

MB: What's the relation between subjectivity and intersubjectivity? #diacamp

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4s



Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai

PH: Subjectivity = human beings forged through their life experience. #diacamp

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now




Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai

MB: Subjectivity = also subject's experience of their self. #diacamp

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7s



Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai

CW: There is no subjectivity without intersubjectivity. #diacamp

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15s

KK Lin: Intersubjective exchange? Could you clarify, please?

David Rooksby: Seems to me that ‘intersubjective exchange’ is just a fancy way to say ‘trading something between people’.

Phil Hind: I’ll respond to that. There is actually quite a bit of discussion on this in sociological research, David. Alex Gillespie and Flora Cornish identify no less than six notions of intersubjectivity. They range from having a shared definition of an object; to a more cognitive emphasis that attributes intentionality, belief and feelings to others; to more interactionalist approaches that focus on intersubjectivity as closer to performativity between and among subjects; to a dialogic emphasis that foregrounds the subjects’ taken-for-granted context of their interlocution.⁴

David Rooksby: That’s quite a laundry list. What’s the bill?

Phil Hind: Gillespie and Cornish eventually settle on ‘a variety of relations between perspectives’⁵ in their study on the dialogical analysis of intersubjectivity. They favour this definition for its *inclusiveness*.

David Rooksby: ‘Between perspectives’. Whose perspectives—the folks involved?

Marsha Bradfield: David, you’re flagging the relation between ‘subjectivity’ and ‘intersubjectivity’.

David Rooksby: Well, of course I am. But just humour me for a minute and define ‘subjectivity’ again.

Phil Hind: Yes, yes, of course. A relatively non-contentious definition from a social science perspective is that ‘subjectivity’ describes a human being fashioned through their life experience,⁶ so—

Allison Jones: So the point of issue here is that a subject is produced through social discourses, linguistic and organisational structures and signifying systems. ‘Subjectivity’, in other words, is not so much *given* as it is slowly *constructed*—and *transformed*—over time and through experience.⁷


Marsha Bradfield: But I think we can also understand subjectivity as a subject’s *experience of self*. Subjectivity is not *only* constructed. It’s *also* experienced, with this *experience* feeding back into a subject’s—a person’s—becoming, their self-realisation.

David Rooksby: It seems to me, then, that ‘intersubjectivity’ would be a person’s experience of their self in *relation* to others—other people.

Phil Hind: Other selves. Yes, quite, you would think so, but this is not a popular definition, at least not in sociology.

Christian Wiseman: And post-structuralist philosophies of self-other relations tend to focus on ‘intersubjectivity’ as arising *between* subjects as well as *subsuming* them. Many of them depend on the idea there is no ‘subjectivity’ *without* ‘intersubjectivity’.^{8*} Tina and I will explore this later today in our discussion of the ethics of dialogic art practice, with reference to the kind of subjectivity we believe may be forged through dialogic art.

Ella Stone: *Oui, mais*—are ‘subjectivity’ and ‘intersubjectivity’ not simply two points along the same continuum? Does ‘subjectivity’, in Marsha’s sense, not refer more to a subject’s experience of self? And is ‘intersubjectivity’ not more



Duchamp's Sister

@CassyAppadurai

JJ: CBR tells us nothing about the construction workers' intersubjective exchange. #diacamp

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5s




TheJargonBuster

@TheJargonBuste1

#diacamp Exchange = the act of giving one thing and receiving another (?)

Expand

now




Duchamp's Sister

@CassyAppadurai

JJ: Why

Expand



Duchamp's Sister

@CassyAppadurai

would dialogic art concern itself with figurative dialogues when there are many con art practices that are literally dialogic? #diacamp

Expand

8s

John Johnson:

KK Lin:

Phil Hind:

KK Lin:

John Johnson:

Brian Updike:

KK Lin:

John Johnson:

KK Lin:

John Johnson:

Brian Updike:

Ella Stone:

John Johnson:

concerned with, as Christian said, the subjectivity ‘arising between subjects as well as subsuming them’ and Phil’s sense that intersubjectivity is ‘a variety of relations between perspectives’?

KK, perhaps you could address how ‘intertersubjective exchange’ features in *Chantier Barbès-Rochechouart*?

Um, okay. Let me consider that for a moment. All right, what about the exchange between the construction workers as they raise the building? Or between the artist and the, um, ‘audience’, I guess, for lack of a better word, by way of the artwork?

Yes, KK. You’re saying that without the construction workers’ intersubjective exchange, there would be *no* construction site. *No* construction site, *no Chantier Barbès-Rochechouart*—*no Permanent Construction Site*.

Well, yes. Yes, and I’m also thinking about what’s at stake in Bourriaud’s discussion of Huyghe’s artwork. Bourriaud speaks about Huyghe capturing ‘the fleeting, fragile nature of human labour, the relationships of which it is composed’⁹ but which aren’t always acknowledged in the end product—that being a building, or a work of art!

Okay, okay, but, look—Huyghe’s artwork tells us absolutely *nothing* about the construction workers’ intersubjective exchange, beyond the fact that it *appears* to be producing some kind of building.

And I know for a fact they’re actors.¹⁰ Does that matter?

Um, well, I guess I’m not sure. I don’t think so, as they’re still authorial subjects. But I was going to say—

Excuse me for interrupting, KK, but there’s also your claim that the ‘triple-A’ relation among the artist-artwork-audience *is* an intersubjective one, right? Quite aside from this being a standard relation in art, and therefore anything *but* exclusive to dialogic art, I have to ask how this qualifies as ‘exchange’.¹¹ Look, I can’t see how the audience might interact with this artwork by exchanging anything in a way that alters it *perceptibly*.¹² But then, maybe it’s enough for them to give it their attention in exchange for whatever the artwork can offer in return. *Maybe*—

What about the dialogue between the *temporalities*?

Okay, the point is, this is a *figurative* dialogue at best and art is full of them! So, look, what I’m really wondering is why dialogic art would concern itself with figurative dialogues when there is an abundance of contemporary art practices that are *literally* dialogic—relational and socially engaged art, for instance. Both often involve people in quite straightforward acts of intersubjective exchange.

Absolutely. I was thinking about this too and—

Brian, perhaps you let John finish, *oui*?

Okay, you’ve said, KK, that *Chantier Barbès-Rochechouart* is an instance of dialogic art. But, listen, I think what you actually *delivered* is much closer to a dialogic *reading*, influenced by Bourriaud’s thinking, of a rather *conventional* artwork. Look, I try to see as much as I can, but I’m just not convinced.



Duchamp's Sister

@CassyAppadurai

now

KK: DA necessarily concerned with intersubjectivity? Yes! #diacamp

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TheJargonBuster

@TheJargonBuste1

now

#diacamp MB: 'Dialogue' and 'relation' are not convertible terms in DA. All dialogues are relations but not all relations are dialogues.

Expand



TheJargonBuster

@TheJargonBuste1

now

#diacamp Are 'dialogue' and 'exchange' convertible terms in DA?

Expand



Duchamp's Sister

@CassyAppadurai

3s

MB: Challenge of DA: exploring dialogue is reflexive—have to be in dialogue to investigate it. #diacamp

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What is dialogic art

@DialogicArt

now

#diacamp Dialogue also a perspective! The more you work the dialogue, the more you see it everywhere.

Expand



Duchamp's Sister

@CassyAppadurai

4s

PH: Reflexivity as self-reference also an issue in human sciences—sociological theory is itself a sociological phenomenon. #diacamp

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KK Lin:

I guess I’m a little confused about this preoccupation in dialogic art with ‘intersubjectivity’. Was this ever even up for grabs? Why ‘intersubjective interaction’ or ‘exchange’ and not ‘spatiotemporal dialogue’?

Marsha Bradfield:

It’s a good question that reminds me of a conversation I recently had with my supervisor, Stephen Scrivener. We discussed his impression of an exhibition, *Mondrian and Nicholson in Parallel* at the Courtauld.¹³ Stephen was interested in the ways it placed these two painters *in dialogue*. And the *moment* I entered the exhibition, I knew *exactly* what he meant. Mondrian’s and Nicholson’s styles and sensibilities informed each other with revealing effect through their *juxtaposition*. Clearly, these paintings were *in dialogue*. But then so is everything! And that was really Stephen’s point. He was trying to help me to bound the research, to focus it in a way so that dialogue *here* didn’t become a theory of everything, with ‘dialogue’ and ‘relation’ becoming convertible terms.

Shadworth Dyson:

Yes, well, if I may say, Marsha, I think it important to stress the disciplinary context in which dialogue is being explored—the way sociolinguistics, for instance, engages dialogue through language, with emphasis being placed on both verbal language and nonverbal exchange.

Marsha Bradfield:

Yes, Shadworth, disciplinary context is *important*. But you’ll recall what Allison was saying about art being *extra-disciplinary*. Contemporary art practice can’t rely on a disciplinary focus because it borrows from so many sources. Going back to the idea of everything being in dialogue, I think this is captured in an experience I had when visiting *Mondrian and Nicholson in Parallel* with a friend, Simon Watt-Milne. So we were discussing the significance of Mondrian’s and Nicholson’s paintings being in dialogue, and Simon told a story I think indicates the kind of challenges Allison and I face in *bounding* and *rebounding* our research. Simon spoke of an art student who took up the project of drawing three smaller circles within a larger one. Here, try it.... See what I mean? Over and over again, the student drew this pattern in all possible combinations. He was hoping to produce something that *didn’t* evoke a face. But after countless attempts he found no way of doing this.

David Rooksby:

And so? What’s the moral of the story, if I may ask?


Marsha Bradfield:

That intersubjective exchange provides a much-needed anchor for our research. I mean, you can see *everything in dialogue* and *dialogue in everything*. So you have to focus on *something in* or *as* dialogue and really look at *that*. At the same time—and this is an important point—this *seeing*, this *focusing*—the focus of *our* research—points to one of the challenges of taking dialogue as a subject of research—it’s *reflexive*. It’s another case of self-reference—to *understand* dialogue, I, the researcher, have to be *in* dialogue.

Phil Hind:

Yes, of course. This is a well-established challenge in the human sciences as well. It makes good sense that a sociological theory, for example, is *itself* a sociological phenomenon—the social theory provides the terms with which social phenomena are engaged.¹⁴ This differs from the physical sciences,

123



Duchamp's Sister

@CassyAppadurai

5s

KK: How can DA acknowledge the artist being in dialogue with the intersubjective dialogue she is exploring? #diacamp

Expand



Duchamp's Sister

@CassyAppadurai

now

KL: How do figurative dialogues figure in DA? #diacamp

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Duchamp's Sister

@CassyAppadurai

now

JJ: Introduces Babak Golkar's 'The Science and Philosophy of Mutation' as an example of a DAW. #diacamp

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Duchamp's Sister

@CassyAppadurai

3s

JJ: Golkar's DAW more DA than CBR, based on a literal dialogue — story telling. #diacamp

Expand

KK Lin:

where the subject matter exists more or less *independently* of the scientist, though, of course, there is debate about this—that is, about the degree to which *anything* exists outside of its perception. But the truth is that the more immediate issue here is that sociologists are active and creative *participants*, as opposed to objective *observers*.¹⁵ So then the outcomes they generate need to acknowledge this in some way.

I guess what I’m wondering is, doesn’t the same hold for dialogic art? I mean, um, doesn’t the dialogic artist need to acknowledge *their* participation in the dialogue they’re engaging? Marsha, it would be good to explore this further today, along with your broader interest in intersubjective exchange as a referent for dialogic art. But I’m not really sure if *this* type of dialogue is the best focus for my dissertation. I’m, um, I’m still wondering, and this goes back to something I touched on earlier. I guess, it’s still unclear to me what kind of space there is for *figurative* dialogue—including spatiotemporal dialogue like the kind featured in *Chantier Barbès-Rochechouart*. What kind of space is there for figurative dialogue if dialogic art is, as Marsha claims, ‘anchored’ in intersubjective exchange? Can anyone help me with this?

John Johnson:

KK, you’re interested in photography, right? Well, look, I have an example that I think might address this question by way of comparison. Listening to you speak about *Chantier Barbès-Rochechouart* reminded me of an exhibition by the Canadian artist, Babak Golkar, which I saw at Centre A in Vancouver back in 2003. It was titled *The Science and Philosophy of Mutation*. I’m sorry, I don’t have any images. You’ll have to trust my description and use your imagination.

Okay, like *Chantier Barbès-Rochechouart*, Golkar’s artwork involved a before-and-after relation. This organised the artwork’s mimetic scheme, making it ‘the dialogic tactic’, if you will. But rather than *nesting* images, as Huyghe does, Golkar *juxtaposed* two portraits—two images of the same person were hung side by side. The first one pictured a storyteller. It featured the storyteller *before* he told the story of his life—sorry, Maeve, I’ll correct myself—before he or *she* told the story of his or *her* life. The second photograph was made *afterwards*, after this narration was complete. So the before-and-after was about manifesting the sitter’s *transformation* through the storytelling. But, look—there was a catch.

David Rooksby:

There always is.

John Johnson:

There was a single listener hearing the story, okay, and they *became* the storyteller—the sitter—in the next cycle. So he or *she* repeated the so-called story of *their* life to another loan listener, who in turn became the narrator-stroke-sitter,¹⁶ if you see what I mean. Okay?

The point is that, as an example of dialogic art, *Science and Philosophy of Mutation* depends on a *literal* instance of intersubjective exchange. This exchange—this *literal* dialogue—plays a conspicuous role in the artwork’s production and representation. Yet this dialogue isn’t literal in the artwork as an *outcome*. But, look—*this* is what makes it interesting.



Fig. 3.3

KK Lin: So, Chinese whispers, but the end result is silent—the photographs don’t actually *speak* like the people did when they were telling the story, do they?

John Johnson: Well, the photographs speak by showing—or at least *evoking*—the authorial subject’s transformation *through* their storytelling.

KK Lin: I’m confused.

John Johnson: Okay, look—assuming we agree that dialogic art is ‘anchored’ in intersubjective exchange, what your discussion of *Chantier Barbès-Rochechouart* has helped me to clarify, KK, is that the dialogues featured in dialogic works of art should be based on *literal* acts of dialogue.

KK Lin: But I understood you to say that *Science and Philosophy of Mutation* deploys a *figurative* dialogue. The images don’t actually speak, do they?

John Johnson: No, but this dialogue references an actual—*historical*—instance of intersubjective exchange. I recall thinking that it was practically impossible *not* to recognise the difference between the before-and-after portraits, even if there was very little to perceive. That difference was, of course, the storyteller’s transformation *through* their intersubjective exchange. Or at least that’s what the juxtaposition evoked.

KK Lin: Across the two images? So you’re saying, simply, that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts?

John Johnson: Yes, right, that’s exactly right, KK. But, look, I think it’s more important for our broader discussion of dialogic art that, instead of *personifying* spatiotemporal or other kinds of dialogue and attributing them with the volition to interact, *Science and Philosophy of Mutation* takes an historical dialogue and renders it figurative in a way that refers back to the literal dialogue—the storytelling through which the artwork was produced.

Cassy Appadurai: So, to sum up, John, you’re saying that a literal or historical dialogue, as an instance of intersubjective exchange, can find figurative representation in a dialogic work of art, but that this is not the case in reverse—a figurative dialogue *can’t* or *shouldn’t* be personified. Have I captured the gist of it?

John Johnson: Yes, you have, Cassy. Or at least that’s my *current* sense of dialogic art. But what would this mean for *your* dissertation, KK?

KK Lin: I guess, um, it means that I won’t be arguing that *Chantier Barbès-Rochechouart* qualifies as a dialogic artwork—when a condition of this type of art is that it takes a literal instance of intersubjective exchange as its referent!

[Barcamp laughs.]

So I guess I’ll focus instead on the role that *reflexivity* can play in drawing out the dialogic interplay in spatiotemporal relations by way of self-reference. Does that make sense? And here I’m thinking about ‘dialogic’ as ‘related to or in the form of dialogue’. Is that a valid argument?

Maeve Cutty: Could we see *Chantier Barbès-Rochechouart* again, please?

KK Lin: Of course. (Fig. 3.3)



Duchamp's Sister

@CassyAppadurai

3s

KK: Reflexivity in CBR—can't recognise importance of labour without labouring to understand this. #diacamp

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Duchamp's Sister

@CassyAppadurai

now

KK: DA need not/cannot show all the labour that goes into producing a DAW—just needs a mimetic scheme that draws attention to this. #diacamp

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Duchamp's Sister

@CassyAppadurai

now

AJ: Refractive reflexivity = occurs when media calls attention to its own opacity. #diacamp

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What is dialogic art

@DialogicArt

now

#diacamp Is a dialogic approach one that draws attention to the impossibility of any absolute conclusions?

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Mave Cutty : You know, luv, I think you’re proposing a very interesting idea. And I’m wondering if you could say more about *reflexivity* in *Chantier Barbès-Rochechouart*. Like, how, from your perspective, does Huyghe’s artwork draw out the interplay of the spatiotemporal relations at stake?

KK Lin: Yes, but, before I do that, may I suggest that you—all of us, really—recall Phil’s apprehension that dialogic artworks run the risk of infinite regress. So, I am just wondering if reflexivity like the kind in *Chantier Barbès-Rochechouart* may offer a way of coping with this in the form of *self-reference*.


Should I clarify a bit? All right. Hillary Lawson argues that all our claims about the world are reflexive in ways that can’t be avoided.¹⁷ So, um, in the case of *Chantier Barbès-Rochechouart*, we can only recognise the importance of labour in this artwork by labouring to understand it *through* our interpretation. I think this chimes with your point earlier, Marsha, about engaging dialogue *through* dialogue. Does that make sense? Okay, good.

Um, but Huyghe’s artwork doesn’t actually represent *all* the labour involved in its realisation—and nor could it, right? I think, instead, it references what Clark earlier called ‘this *other* labour’ or ‘this *othered* labour’. It does this, um, through the interplay of content and form within the artwork’s nesting scheme. So, then, *the past of the historical image* is nested within the *contemporaneity* of the *artwork* as an *object*—a cohesive expression—and this, in turn, is nested within *the artwork in the present*, as it’s made *present* to me through my interpretation. And, when I think about it, that’s all that I need to get me considering all the *work*, the labour I mean, involved in the production of this *artwork*—material and conceptual, past, present and future. In other words, maybe I don’t *need* to see all the labour involved in bringing *Chantier Barbès-Rochechouart* into being. Maybe I just need a representational scheme that makes me aware of it and locates me somewhere in the chain of production. Does that sound plausible?

Allison Jones: Not only plausible but interesting, KK. In fact, Mary Anne Francis, who also draws on Lawson’s thinking in discussion of her practice of writing as art, argues for something like this, which she calls *refractive reflexivity*. This occurs when the media of something isn’t *transparent* but instead *opaque*. For with opacity comes deferral—meaning is deferred as the medium thickens.¹⁸ So it’s like the artwork gestures towards something beyond itself, if you see what I mean.

Shadworth Dyson: Ah, yes. Deconstruction.

KK Lin: Um, well, Lawson looks at reflexivity in Derrida’s deconstruction, but he also considers it in terms of self-reference in Nietzsche’s philosophy. And come to think of it, Lawson’s take on this is explicitly dialogic, when he insists that you can’t really read any of Nietzsche’s philosophy in isolation. This is a little convoluted, as it’s part of a bigger argument. But as part of this, Lawson speaks about being able to cite Nietzsche to support almost any point of view. He says something to the effect that this can be explained by the fact that there are so many complex layers of irony at play in Nietzsche’s texts, the



Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai now

KL: Reflexivity in Nietzsche—can't take what he says at face value. #diacamp


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KL: Reflexivity in Nietzsche—no absolute conclusions. #diacamp


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Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai 3s


SD: Dialogue is an ambivalent form. #diacamp

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Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai now


KL: 'I don't know what it means to say, on one hand, you can't take an artwork's representational scheme at face value' while ... #diacamp



Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai now

KL (cont'd.): ... also wanting to acknowledge artwork's authorial becoming and ... #diacamp

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Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai now

KL: CBR doesn't qualify as DA if DA takes intersubjective exchange as its referent. #diacamp

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Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai now

BU: Edwardo Kac argues that dialogical art should only refer to literal dialogues. #diacamp

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Clark Chris:

Shadworth Dyson: Excuse me, Clark, but I would like to lodge very quickly that this also connects to Allison's insistence earlier that dialogue is a value neutral form to the extent that it can be purposed to multiple ends. Though I should say that, when it comes to a 'dialogic *disposition*', a dialogic *representation* or any other expression of 'the dialogic' being centrifugal, the ideas of dialogue as value neutral and/or relativist run up against a limit the moment we acknowledge that the ambivalence of dialogue *is* a value of sorts.

Marsha Bradfield: I suppose what you're saying, KK, is that the self-reference in *Chantier Barbès-Rochechouart* calls into question the validity of *both* the so-called historical image and the contemporary one. But what do you think this means for your concern with the artwork's ethical form? You mentioned something about 'ethical form' earlier and it strikes me as important, so—

KK Lin: Well, um, the truth is, Marsha, I don't know. On the one hand, um, on the one hand you can say that you *can't* take an artwork's representation at face value, as factual, right? But on the other hand, this very same scheme *can* sometimes acknowledge the artwork's *actual* authorial becoming, so how it came into being, through documenting some process, perhaps. I guess this points to a tension, doesn't it? Does anyone else have any thoughts?

Brian Updike: Absolutely! But does that mean anyone has any answers? That, I don't know.

KK Lin: Good—at least I'm not the only one. But what, um, I think I *do* know for certain is that *Chantier Barbès-Rochechouart* doesn't *explicitly* explore intersubjective exchange. And if we've agreed this is what 'anchors' dialogic art, then Huyghe's artwork doesn't qualify, does it? But what about *reflexivity* as a 'dialogic *tactic*' for organising and reigning in the dialogues? I'm referring to the dialogues composing this representation of labour, dispersed across the *various* dialogues. As a *tactic*, could this reflexive representation, or what Allison called 'refractive reflexivity', be, um, a strategy for short circuiting the problem of infinite regress in dialogic art? I feel like I'm repeating myself now but, well, I guess what I think is that all the labour that goes into the artwork's realisation is *evoked* without being *evidenced*. Does that make sense?

Brian Updike: Yes, absolutely, KK. But could I go back to something? Why would dialogic art concern itself with *figurative* dialogues when such an abundance of contemporary art practices are *literally* dialogic? And isn't this also the view that Edwardo Kac takes? Are you familiar with his dialogic approach to electronic art? It dates back to, well, all the way back to the late 1990s and draws on several philosophies of dialogue, including Bakhtin's theory of intersubjectivity based on reciprocity and mutuality.²¹



Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai

KL: Literal dialogues too narrow. #diacamp

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TheJargonBuster @TheJargonBuste1

#diacamp Ocularcentrism—emphasis on art (espy visual art) being experienced by being looked at—or that art is something to be looked at.

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now



Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai

KK: Differentiates between literal authorship and interpretive authorship (arising through interpretation) in DA. #diacamp

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now



Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai

KK: What's lost by reducing DA to real-time, literal, intersubjective exchange? Doesn't this elide the huge range of dialogues?

#diacamp Expand Reply Delete Favorite

4s



Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai

AL: How does CBR make its 'distributed authorship' explicit in its mimetic scheme? #diacamp

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now



Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai

We're moving from representation to authorship. #diacamp

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now



What is dialogic art @DialogicArt

#diacamp Isn't authorship a form of representation?

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3s

Now Kac absolutely holds the view that dialogic art is about *literal* dialogue—*actual* intersubjective exchange—and he investigates this idea through electronic art and telecommunications, including tele-presence, as an exchange with a remote *other*. He gives the example of two dancers interacting via remote imaging and their interaction shaping their dance through a *literal* dialogue, albeit one mediated by technology. Am I alone in thinking that, if Kac were producing dialogic art today, he might be using Twitter?

KK Lin: Yes, Brian. I mean, yes, I see what you mean about Kac, not that you’re alone in thinking that. And I guess I can see this as one approach to dialogic art. But I’m also wondering if limiting this type of art to literal dialogue in the form of real-time exchange might be too narrow. I mean, who builds and organises these interactive platforms? And how does this construction figure in Kac’s sense of dialogic art?

Brian Updike: Do I think he’s more concerned with the potential of dialogic art to overcome entrenched convictions about art that are rooted in ocularcentrism and unilateral reception than with broader issues of authorial labour?²² Absolutely! But, as I’ve said, I *do* think he’s correct to emphasise real-time forms of interaction as not only being constitutive of dialogic art—these interactions themselves are actually also *art*.

KK Lin: All right, I see. But, um, Brian, I wonder if maybe this limits the experience of these artworks. By contrast, the approach to dialogic art that I’m proposing offers at least two opportunities for authorship—the co-authorial process of the art’s literal production, and the dialogic artwork as an outcome of this process. In the case of the latter, it’s authored through its interpretation, and this interpretation is prompted, in the case of *Chantier Barbès-Rochechouart*, by its reference to labour. And, also, it extends to the labour of interpreting the work of art. I suppose what I’m wondering, Brian, is what is lost by reducing dialogic art to real-time intersubjective exchange? I worry that this risks *eliding* the huge range of dialogues that support this kind of relation—do you see what I mean?

Anne Lang: You know, this comes onto authorship. And, KK, you said something earlier about the mimetic scheme in *Chantier Barbès-Rochechouart*—about it drawing attention to the dialogues that author the artwork in a way. I mean, you said that it prompted you to wonder how all the interlocutors in this dialogue—the artist Huyghe, the construction workers and those encountering this dialogic artwork—*author* it in distinct but, sort of, overlapping ways.

Sooo acting in my role as *TheJargonBuster*, I would say that ‘authorship’ acknowledges the reality of things being made—produced. I mean, it’s a pretty basic definition, but ‘authors’ are those who produce these things—so an artwork is authored but so are its interpretations. Have you any thoughts on this, KK?



Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai now

AJ: Collective subjects in art practice often discussed with reference to 'c' words,

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Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai 6s

eg co- authorship, co-production, collaboration. #diacamp

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Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai now

AJ: Participation = interacting with an 'it'. #diacamp

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Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai now

ES: Dave Beech says participation = 'taking part', 'having to share'. #diacamp

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- KK Lin:

Um, I guess I’m not sure that either dialogic art or I has a ready-made answer to the question, ‘What is authorship?’ I think, um, yes I can imagine each dialogic artwork exploring authorship by testing and inhabiting familiar authorial practices and maybe even experimenting with alternatives? Does that make sense?
- Allison Jones:

For sure, contemporary art is hankering for models that move beyond the fiction of the independent author, as well as collaborative authorship as a vague description that can mean pretty much anything. As I’m sure you know, KK, there has been growing interest in art authored in the first person plural—I mean, ‘we’. And many of these collective subjects are discussed with reference to the, sort of, you know, ‘c’ words. In keeping with ‘co’, the prefix meaning ‘with’, there is *collaboration*, *cooperation*, *co-ordination*, *corporation* and *collectivity*,²³ as well as *co-production* and *co-creation*. And there is also *participation*, which I would say, sort of describes interacting with an ‘it’. An example might be completing a preset task in a dialogic artwork, which may or may not involve interacting with other people by way of objects, if you see what I mean?
- Ella Stone:


Allison, are you familiar with artist and theorist Dave Beech? Particularly, his definition of ‘participation’, which I should say he gets from critic and curator Claire Bishop? *Non*? Well, Beech defines ‘participation’ in terms of *interactivity*, and vice versa. But ‘interactivity’ actually has two meanings for both Beech and Bishop. So we can interact with each other, can we not? That’s the first meaning. And there is also *user interaction*. An example of this latter interaction would include using digital technologies, such as a cash machine—you see? This seems to me to be what you’re calling ‘participation’ when you describe it as interaction with an ‘it’. But, if Beech thinks ‘participation’ means ‘taking part’ and ‘having to share’, then is the distinction, perhaps, that interactivity is more physical, and participation more social?²⁴
- Marsha Bradfield:

I appreciate what you’re saying, Ella, and I think it’s also really important because it points to the *range* of labour and involvement in cultural production. Like most of us here, if not all of us, I often occupy multiple roles, each with their own *kind* of involvement. I suppose I’m saying there’s a distinction to be made, for instance, between, on the one hand, my booking this project space and organising the projector, screen and chairs for today’s barcamp, and, on the other hand, my role as a contributor/facilitator.
- Cassy Appadurai:

So what *is* the role of the artist in dialogic art, in light of everything we’ve discussed so far? Can we draw a line around it and give it a bit more shape? KK, what do you think?
- KK Lin:

I would say the artist is one of the authors, but I’m not sure all the authors are always artists, if that makes sense. I’m thinking this would, um, be determined, maybe, on a case-by-case basis.
- Ella Stone:

Oui, yes, KK. And does this not bring us back to subjectivity—back to roles like ‘artist,’ ‘author,’ ‘participant’ and ‘collaborator’, which *socialise* authorial




Duchamp's Sister

@CassyAppadurai

now

ES: Roles like 'artist' socialise authorial subjects in certain ways, wrapped up with expectations. #diacamp

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What is dialogic art

@DialogicArt

now

#diacamp Getting beyond roles in DA means radically rethinking how art practice works.

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Duchamp's Sister

@CassyAppadurai

8s

KL: Not so much about 'liberating' authorial subjects from roles but acknowledging the kind of labour and subjection they involve? #diacamp

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Duchamp's Sister

@CassyAppadurai

21s

KL: There's a politics of representation at stake in DA. #diacamp

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Duchamp's Sister

@CassyAppadurai

now

KL: Representing authorial labour, subjects and how subjects are shaped through their labour = subjection (?) #diacamp

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The Wisemans

@TheWisemans

8s

#diacamp Representation of subjection connects to Nealon's argument that instead of 'identity politics', we need an 'alterity politics'.

Expand



TheJargonBuster

@TheJargonBust1

now

#diacamp Define 'alterity politics,' please.

Expand

KK Lin:

Ella Stone:
KK Lin:

Marsha Bradfield:

Allison Jones:

subjects in certain ways, wrapped up with expectations? Beech makes the point that participants don't tend to *critique* something they're participating in because, unlike collaborators, participants don't have the same rights.²⁵ Could it not be that these rights would include being party to the decision-making involved in the production of the artwork? I assume the artist would, at least, be involved in that decision-making, if not facilitating it.

But is there not another way of understanding Beech's argument—that, the terms of engagement that organise an artwork *condition* authorial subjectivities? Beech thinks we need to question the expectations that come with authorial roles and the kinds of subjectivities they shape. He wonders how art practice might be configured differently, as something more like, for example, an *economy*—an economy of practice that is more dispersed, more sensitive to combinations of agency, control, and self-determination, rather than role-based organisation.²⁶ So is it not about getting beyond the *roles* in authorial practice and, by extension, the specific subjectivities they produce? And, then, is it not, also, about how we can *liberate* the practice of dialogic art from these roles so that more fluid subjectivities can begin to take shape? Well I'm not sure I can answer your question, Ella! Beyond saying that I can see value in acknowledging the *range of roles* and *responsibilities* in the artistic practice of dialogic art. I guess, for me, it's less about 'liberating' authorial subjects from these roles and, um, it's more about acknowledging the kind of labour they entail and the *subjectivation* they involve—so how they shape subjectivities, if you see what I mean. There's a politics at stake in this acknowledgment, isn't there? And different kinds of work *do* forge different kinds of subjectivities—don't they?

Bien sûr. If by this you mean—

Well, I *mean*, um, well perhaps I should clarify with an example? I'm struck by the mimetic complexity of the *Chantier Barbès-Rochecouart's* construction of the construction workers. To me, they are *objects* of representation on the one hand, but they are also *subjects*—authorial subjects—who are pictured in the act of constructing. So the workers are authoring the building's construction while they're authoring the artwork. But they're also being authored—*represented*—by the images. Do you see what I mean? And something this highlights for me is all the *civilians*—the support workers, if you will—whose labour sustains contemporary art but who more often than not go unacknowledged. What about *their* authorial subjectivities? So I'm thinking there's a *politics of representation* at stake here and I'm wondering how it extends to dialogic art more generally. Is this making sense?

It does, KK. In fact, what you're saying reminds me of Andrew Chesher's practice-based research on the dialogic documentary. It explores this documentary form as it intervenes in social acts. Andrew calls this 'dialogising social practice'.²⁷

You should mention, Marsha, that Andrew was our cohort at Chelsea and was also supervised by Neil Cummings.



The Wisemans @TheWisemans now

#diacamp Alterity politics = how we've come to be who we are—more focus on subjectivation.

Expand



TheJargonBuster @TheJargonBuste1 now

Comment: TheJargonBuster #diacamp Define 'subjectivation,' please.

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The Wisemans @TheWisemans now

#diacamp See Michel Foucault – process of becoming 'subject' in contrast to 'object'. Dictionnire Philosophie.

Expand



Allison Allie Jones @AllisonAllieJon now

#diacamp CA to summarise five key points (KP) from this session to take forward.

Expand



Allison Allie Jones @AllisonAllieJon now

#diacamp KP1: Our DA takes literal, intersubjective exchange as referent; other DAs may take other referents.

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Marsha Bradfield: Yes, that’s right. Now, there’s an important point of overlap between Andrew’s research and KK’s concern about the politics of representation *and* attribution in dialogic art, which I think we can connect to what Bourriaud called ‘the ethical conception of form’.²⁸ When it comes to Andrew’s research, I don’t think it’s conscientious enough in engaging the ethical dimensions of documentary authorship. One of his projects, *Seeing in the Dark*, took place in a school for the blind in India, with the documentary *dialogising* the participants’ words and actions.²⁹ But the ethical conundrums of this representation aren’t something that Andrew explores—or at least not in his PhD thesis. When he *does* consider the ethics of self-other relations and the other’s representation, they tend to be concerned with what happens *in front* of the camera. So he foregrounds the ambiguity and heterogeneity of the other’s enunciation of social acts³⁰ but he doesn’t interrogate his own as an artist-documentarian.

John Johnson: Okay, so Marsha and KK are preoccupied with the *politics of representation* and *attribution* in dialogic art, and Ella is worried about the *over-determination* of *subjectivities* in role-based co-authorial art practice. But, look, the point is, where does this leave us in our discussion of dialogic art?

Marsha Bradfield: Cassy, you’re our barcamp reporter. I *know* I’m putting you on the spot, but could you identify a few key points that we should take forward, in your view?

Cassy Appadurai: Well, it was a very wide-ranging discussion!
[Barcamp laughs.]

This is funny, sure, but it’s also frustrating. Trying to tweet this session was next to impossible. And I’m also aware that we’re already running behind schedule. I’m not facilitating here, but maybe these are things we could keep in mind—focus and timekeeping.

Marsha Bradfield: It’s a good point, Cassy. Thank you.

Cassy Appadurai: Of course. So key points to take forward, um, well. Hmm. I’ll venture a few. Could someone tweet these, please?

Allison Jones: Yes, I’ll do that. We have to make sure we have a record of these for our research!

Cassy Appadurai: Thanks. So to begin with, I think KK’s analysis of *Chantier Barbès-Rochechouart* signalled that there *could*, in fact, be dialogic ‘arts’, plural, in contrast to dialogic ‘art’, each one with an approach ‘anchored’ in a particular *kind* of dialogue. There was discussion about the dialogic art that Marsha and Allie are theorising being especially concerned with intersubjective exchange, and taking an instance of this kind of dialogue as its referent.

Second, John’s comparison between *Chantier Barbès-Rochechouart* and, what was it called? Ah yes, *The Science and Philosophy of Mutation*. So this comparison clarified one way that *figurative* dialogue might function in the service of *literal* dialogue in dialogic works of art. He argued that, whilst *literal*



Allison Allie Jones @AllisonAllieJon

now

#diacamp KP2: Figurative dialogues may feature in DA when they refer to literal ones.

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Allison Allie Jones @AllisonAllieJon

5m

#diacamp KP3: Reflexivity as self-reference could be dialogic tactic; evoke the labour in the DAW's authorial becoming.

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Allison Allie Jones @AllisonAllieJon

now

#diacamp KP3: KK question re 'ethics of opacity' in DAW.

Expand



Allison Allie Jones @AllisonAllieJon

now

#diacamp KP4: 'Subjectivity' and 'intersubjectivity' in authorial roles.

Expand



Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai

10m

Barcamp claps. #diacamp

Expand

John Johnson:

Cassy Appadurai:

dialogues may take figurative form, it might be better to avoid *personifying* figurative dialogues, as this would make the focus of dialogic art too broad. Have I captured that correctly, John?

Yes, that’s the gist.

Good. There was also discussion about *reflexivity*. I for one was struck by KK’s proposition that reflexivity in the form of self-reference could be a ‘dialogic tactic’ for exploring the labour that comes together in dialogic works of art, *but* in a way that alludes to all this work without trying to capture *everything*, which is obviously an impossible task. So this is the third point.

Then, discussion moved into talk about reflexivity in the exploration of dialogue. The general idea seemed to be that to *engage* dialogue is to be *in* dialogue, correct? Yes? I believe this was when we turned to the issue of authorship—the authorship of dialogic art, composed of dialogic forms, which are also somehow ethical in *how* they acknowledge their own authorship. I’m not sure I’m making this point very clearly, but I think KK cut to the heart of the issue when she said something to the effect that she, KK, didn’t know what it meant to say, on the one hand, that one can’t, of course, take an artwork’s representational scheme at face value--especially when this scheme is overtly self-referential. But on the other hand, sometimes this self-referentiality *can* effectively acknowledge the artwork’s authorial becoming and, by extension, the subjectivation of its authors in the process of its—or their—production. I don’t have any answers—that’s not my responsibility here, today—but, from my perspective as an art journalist, this tension that KK flagged seems to be central in evolving an understanding of dialogic art—even if it’s not something that can be resolved over the course of today’s discussion. It occurred to me we might term this tension the ‘ethics of opacity’, with the knowledge that it encompasses mimetic, political *and* ethical concerns. Clear as mud, right?

Argh! Not punny.

I thought so. The final key point, as I see it, relates to subjectivity and intersubjectivity, which were salient concerns throughout the discussion. And this was explored laterally with reference to *authorial roles*.

Yes, and authorial roles and subjectivities are topics on which I will expand in my contribution—which is coming up next, *oui*?

So this final point will be explored further.

On that note, Cassy, thank you for your much-needed highlights. Your points about timekeeping and focus are well taken. I would also like to thank KK again for her contribution. I hope it will be as useful for your dissertation as it has been for our discussion of dialogic art. Would you join me in thanking KK with a round of applause?

[Barcamp claps.]

¹Stewart Martin, ‘Critique of Relational Aesthetics,’ *Third Text* 21, no. 4 (July 2007): 385.

²Nicholas Bourriaud, ‘The Reversability of the Real: Nicholas Bourriaud on Pierre Huyghe,’ *Tate ETC.*, 7 (Summer 2006) <http://www.tate.org.uk/tateetc/issue7/pierrehuyghe.htm> (accessed May 10, 2011).

³Arthur Danto, ‘The Artworld,’ in *Philosophy Looks at the Arts: Contemporary Readings in Aesthetics*, rev. ed. ed. Josphen Margolis (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1978), 132–144. Danto argues that the art world nominates objects as art in contrast to them having intrinsic ‘artness’.

⁴Alex Gillespie and Flora Cornish, ‘Intersubjectivity: Towards a Dialogical Analysis,’ *Journal for the Theory of Social Behavior* 40, no. 1 (March 2010): 19–20.

⁵*Ibid.*, 19.

⁶Tammy Clewell, ‘Subjectivity’ in *Encyclopedia of Postmodernism*, eds. Victor E. Taylor and Charles E. Winquist (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), 381–382.

⁷*Ibid.*, 382.

⁸*See the Wisemans’ barcamp contribution in this collation, which explores the relation between subjectivity and intersubjectivity with reference to the philosophies of Mikhail Bakhtin and Emmanuel Levinas. See also (Jean-Luc Nancy, *Being Singular Plural*, [Standord: Standord Univeristy Press, 2000], 30.) Here Nancy proposes the relation between subjectivity and intersubjectivty as follows: ‘Being singular plural means the essence of Being is only as co-essence. In turn, co-essence, of being-with (being-with-many), designates the essence of the co-, or even more so, the co- (the cum) itself in the position or guise of an essence . . . If Being is being-with, then it is, in its being-with, the “with” that constitutes Being; the “with” is not simply an addition’. This resonates with dialogue understood as a generative relation in contrast to merely an additive one, which was gestured towards, however obliquely, in KK Lin’s barcamp contribution with reference to ‘the whole being greater than the sum of its parts’.

⁹Bourriaud, ‘The Reversability of the Real.’

¹⁰Martin, ‘Critique of Relational Aesthetics’, 385.

¹¹Stephen Wright, ‘Digging in the Epistemic Commons,’ *Open 12: Freedom of Culture: Regulation and Privatization of Intellectual Property and Public Space*, (n.d.) <http://classic.skor.nl/article-3090-en.html> (accessed June 10, 2010). Drawing on Gabriel Tarde, Stephen Wright argues that knowledge is not something that can be lent or exchanged. Rather, when it comes to understanding, there is emanation without alienation.

¹²David Rokeby, ‘Transforming Mirrors: Introduction’, David Rokeby – Artist, 1996, <http://homepage.mac.com/davidrokeby/mirrorsintro.html> (accessed June 10, 2007). The qualities distinguishing ‘interactive’ artworks are by no means straightforward. However, Rokeby offers a useful definition when he writes, ‘A technology is interactive to the degree that it reflects the consequences of our actions or decisions back to us’. In light of the barcamp discussion, I concede that Pierre Huyghe’s *Chantier Barbès-Rochecouart* fails to accomplishe this and accept the barcamp’s consensus that it does not qualify as a dialogic work of art, in keeping with the understanding evolved here.

¹³*Mondrian II Nicholson: In Parallel*, February 16–May 20, 2012, The Courtauld Gallery, London, UK.

¹⁴‘Reflexivity,’ *The New Fontana Dictionary of Modern Thought*, 3rd ed., eds. Analan Bullock and Stephen Trombley (New York: Harper Collins, 2000), 738–739.

¹⁵*Ibid.*

¹⁶Babak Golkar, *The Science and Philosophy of Mutation*, September 5–October 12, 2003, Centre A, Vancouver (press release) <http://www.centrea.org/index.cfm?go=site.index§ion=exhibitions&tag=archive&id=27> (accessed June 10, 2012).

¹⁷Hilary Lawson, *Reflexivity: The Post-Modern Predicament* (London: Hutchinson, 1985), 9.

¹⁸Mary Anne Francis, ‘The Artist as a Multifarious Agent: An Artist’s Theory of the Origin of Meaning,’ (PhD thesis, Goldsmiths College, University of London, 2000), 29.

¹⁹Lawson, *Reflexivity*, 33.

²⁰*Ibid.*

²¹Eduardo Kac, ‘Negotiating Meaning: The Dialogic Imagination in Electronic Art,’ in *Bakhtinian Perspectives on Language and Culture: Meaning in Language, Art and New Media*, eds. Finn Bostad, Craig Brandist, Lars Evensen Sigfred, Hege Charlotte Faber (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 199–216.

²²*Ibid.*

²³Maria Lind, ‘The Collaborative Turn’, in *Taking Matters into Our Own Hands*, eds. Johanna Billing, Maria Lind and Lars Nilsson (London: Black Dog, 2007): 17. See Lind for an expanded discussion on various types of co-authorial practice in contemporary art. She distinguishes, for example, between ‘collaboration’ and ‘cooperation’. Whereas collaboration, in Lind’s view, is ‘an open-ended concept, which in principle encompasses all others, “cooperation” emphasises the notion of working together and mutually benefiting from it’. By contrast, “collective” gives an echo of a way of working within a socialist system. “Collective action” refers precisely to acting collectively while “interaction” [refers to something closer to] pressing a button’. [And finally,] “Participation” is more widely associated with the creation of a context in which

participants can take part in something that someone else has created but where there are, nevertheless, opportunities to have an impact’. Note the definition of ‘participation’ that Lind offers is closer to Dave Beech’s (referenced below) than it is to mine; elaborated in the barcamp discussion. My definition connects more directly to Lind’s and Beech’s definition of ‘interactivity’.

²⁴Dave Beech, ‘Don’t Look Now!’ (Lecture, Loughborough University Business School, Loughborough, UK, January 29, 2009). www.arts.lboro.ac.uk/document.php?o=23 (accessed June 10, 2010).

²⁵*Ibid.*

²⁶*Ibid.*

²⁷Andrew Chesher, ‘Seeing Connections: Documentary as an Intervention in the Social World’ (PhD thesis, University of the Arts London, 2007), 18.

²⁸Bourriaud, ‘The Reversability of the Real’.

²⁹Chesher, ‘Seeing Connections’, 56.

³⁰*Ibid.*, 58–93.

11:41



**‘WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO COLLABORATE
(IN DIALOGIC ART?)’**

Ella Stone

Fig. 4.0

Marsha Bradfield: Ella, may I pass you the remote?

Ella Stone: *Oui, bien sûr*--Brian has slides. Hello again, everyone. So, this will be a double presentation, a combined effort from Brian and me—and, I trust, you too! It’s a good discussion, isn’t it?

Marsha Bradfield: So I’ll leave it to you and Brian to split the time. You’ll have an hour and twenty minutes, total.

Ella Stone: Yes, of course. That’s fine. But there doesn’t seem to be any water?


Marsha Bradfield: Over there, to your left.

Ella Stone: Ah yes. Well, many, many thanks for organising today, Marsha and Allison. I really must say that our discussions have already given me a great deal to think about, and we’re only on the *fourth* contribution! How many will there be, by the end of the day?

Marsha Bradfield: Thirteen, in all.

Ella Stone: Lucky thirteen. Well, considering that the question, ‘What is dialogic art?’ is so open, Brian and I feel that surrounding it from many angles and perspectives is what makes sense.

Alors, I should say that my annotated slide presentation was prepared, but our hard drive *crashed* last night and, it’s embarrassing, but I hadn’t backed it up. So this presentation won’t be as, mmm, cohesive as I might have preferred. I’ll be speaking from notes, peppered with a few quotes. And I’ll supplement the transcript with references when the time comes. Sound good? *Bien*.




Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai

ES and BU are curators in collaboration and explore it. #diacamp

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now




Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai

ES and BU: Approaching collaboration (collab.) requires constant re-calibration. #diacamp

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now




Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai

#diacamp ES: All art is collab Recalls all art being dialogic.

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now




Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai

ES's contribution to explore 'What does it mean to collab. in dialogic art?' #diacamp

Expand

now




TheJargonBuster @TheJargonBuste1

#diacamp ES defines collab. as 'working together'—co-labouring.

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22s




TheJargonBuster @TheJargonBuste1

#diacamp ES also defines collab. as 'working with the enemy'.

Expand

7m



Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai

ES: Claire Bishop (CB) argues that 'relational practice' (RP) is all about the 'creative' rewards of collab. activity. #diacamp

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now

Brian and I are both critics and curators. And because we work in collaboration and investigate this practice in our commentary and curation, our understanding is constantly shifting—*evolving*—as we, mmm, lean into, shall we say, new projects and methods. So, whereas Grant Kester quite confidently asserts on the first page of his new book, *The One and the Many*, that any discussion of dialogic art practice should begin with ‘coming to terms with collaboration itself’,¹ I’m afraid *our* beginning is more modest. Quite simply, we come to the term ‘collaboration’ afresh with each instance we encounter.

Within the terms of this analysis—by which I mean Brian’s and my contributions—art is collaborative to the extent that no artist, artwork or anyone encountering either is an island. I would like to think this view extends to our barcamp. Authorship, co-authorship, participation, co-ordination, collectivity and co-operation as well as spectatorship, viewership, connoisseurship, collecting, curating—the diverse character of this list immediately suggests that *co-labouring* in art is a domain where a wide range of theory and practice meet.

But there’s no one-size-fits-all.

Non. So, what does it mean to collaborate in dialogic art? Exploring this question was something that Brian and I felt was especially important, not only for understanding what dialogic art *is* or could *be*. It’s also important for locating this art in *relation* to other practices of contemporary art that are *conspicuously* concerned with collaboration. This is, in point of fact, central to how we—Brian and I, or is it Brian and me—anyway, how we think about dialogic art. This conspicuousness is something we will both explore in our contributions.

Now Kester, in keeping with much discussion on collaboration, reminds us that, in addition to ‘working together’—co-labouring—there is a second, more *sinister* sense in play. This is the ‘collaboration’ redolent of Vichy, France—co-operating with the enemy, treason, betrayal.² And at least one vein of commentary on collaborative art practice remains caught up with this second definition. This commentary is fixated on determining the extent to which projects and practices *betray* contemporary art by collaborating with the enemy. *Dans ce cas*, collaboration is tantamount to pursuing aims and objectives beyond art as an autonomous spear—forgive me, an autonomous *sphere*.


Okay, so you’re suggesting that commentary—or commentators—of contemporary art who buy into the myth that art is an autonomous sphere are *hostile* to collaboration that doesn’t take art as an end in itself. Is that right?

Well, I would ask you to witness the passionate and provocative position of critic, curator and art historian, Claire Bishop. She takes issue with relational art practices—including dialogical art—on the grounds that they share an interest in ‘the creative rewards of collaborative activity.’³ This sounds, mmm,

David Rooksby:
Ella Stone:

John Johnson:

Ella Stone:



Duchamp's Sister

@CassyAppadurai

now

ES: 'Creative' is CB's word for the practical and utilitarian application of art. #diacamp

Expand



Duchamp's Sister

@CassyAppadurai

now

PH: We can't take 'the social' for granted. #diacamp

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TheJargonBuster

@TheJargonBuster1

7s

#diacamp /art for art's sake = art as an end in itself.

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TheJargonBuster

@TheJargonBuster1

6s

#diacamp Socially engaged art refers to artistic practice that emphasizes the experience of art's own creation as a central dynamic.

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Cassy Appadurai:

fantastique! What's not to love about creative rewards? But this description is actually very pejorative in Bishop's critique of relational practices because, for her, 'creative' rewards are not the same as 'artistic' rewards. 'Creative' seems to be Bishop's word for the *practical* and *utilitarian* application of art, when these aspects take priority over purely its 'artistic' significance—which is to say, its commitment to art as an end in itself.

Ella Stone:

Just to be sure I understand your position Ella—for Bishop, the word 'artistic' describes practices that pursue art as an end in itself, whereas 'creative' is a label that she applies to practices that pursue more concrete ends. Have I captured the gist of it?

Oui—at least, that's my reading. Consider, for example, Bishop's discussion of the Turkish collective Oda Projesi, a group of three artists who work in the Galata district of Istanbul. Their neighbourhood projects are an instance of socially engaged practice that promotes exchange and dialogue. On Bishop's account, this is primarily concerned with 'strengthening the social bond'⁴—and that's a quote. When Bishop interviewed Oda Projesi about their practice, the women explained their decisions were based on creating dynamic and sustained *relationships* with their community.⁵ Can you see, perhaps, how, for commentators of relational art who, like Bishop, hold that art is an autonomous *sphere* of cultural production, such an explicitly social emphasis might be disturbing—disorienting, even?

Phil Hind:

'The social bond'? I'm constantly amazed by the use of the word 'social' as an adjective that functions more like an explanation.⁶ There are 'social problems', 'social issues', and here 'the social bond'—all of which presume that we know what 'the social' is to begin with. I don't think this is something we can take for granted.

Ella Stone:

That's an interesting point, Phil. *Alors*, when Bishop says that Oda Projesi's socially engaged practice is preoccupied with 'strengthening the social bond', I think she actually means two things. She means, on the one hand, that this practice promotes people living together more cohesively—feeling *part* of a *community*. On the other hand, she also means that by being distracted from the business of *l'art pour l'art*, this art as social work self-disqualifies as 'Art' with a capital 'A'. What Bishop *says* is, 'There can be no failed, unsuccessful, unresolved, or boring works of collaborative art because all are equally essential to the task of strengthening the social bond'.⁷ But what she *means* is that this collaborative art cannot fail because it is not actually 'Art'. She simply can't entertain the possibility that collaborative art, including relational practice, might qualify as 'Art' in keeping with a different framework, one that does *not* hold autonomy as a defining feature of art's ontology and teleology—what it is, how it exists and to what ends.⁸ Social work may use artistic techniques that result in it being creative. *Mais* when socially engaged or other forms of relational practice, like Oda Projesi's, seek to be functional and utilitarian, in Bishop's view, they cease to be 'Art'. Do you see?



What is dialogic art @DialogicArt

#diacamp What does autonomy have to do with DA or DA with autonomy?

Expand Reply Delete Favorite

10s



Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai

ES: DA as a type of RP that's distinguished by its dialogic forms is going

Expand

now



Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai

to have to struggle for its own legitimacy and recognition. #diacamp

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3s



Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai

MB: DA may critique an autonomy--based definition of art. #diacamp

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21s



Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai

ES: Will draw on John Roberts's (JR's) theory of collective collab. (collect. collab.)

Expand

now



Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai

re 'What does it mean to collaborate in DA?' #diacamp

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29s

Allison Jones: Ella, there are, of course, many ways of defining dialogic art—and numerous ways of broaching it with reference to collaboration. Why the old, hard, autonomy chestnut?

Ella Stone: ‘Chestnut?’ *Ah, oui.* I think the first thing to say is that it’s a question of *association*. Marsha spoke earlier about her research emerging from a critique of relational aesthetics. And then you, Allison, went on to qualify that your preliminary research indicates that dialogic art has a stronger affinity with *dialogical art* than with *relational aesthetics*, *non*? It seems to me that something that relational aesthetics, dialogic art, dialogical art, socially engaged practice and other practices have in common is that they cannot take their status as ‘Art’ for granted. I find that Bishop’s commentary underscores this very point.

David Rooksby: Maybe the artists working in these areas should just ignore Bishop and get on with their business.

Ella Stone: *Oui*, I understand what you’re saying, David. But it would be difficult to discuss relational practice *without* engaging Bishop. She’s a well-recognised commentator in this subfield of contemporary art. This notwithstanding, I think the main issue here, and this—what’s the expression?—*goes to the heart* of what John and KK were saying earlier. That is, dialogic art, as a type of relational practice, distinguished by its dialogic forms is going to have to *struggle* for its own legitimacy and recognition.


David Rooksby: Because?

Ella Stone: Because the artistic forms of painting, sculpture and drawing are all well established—dialogic forms, less so. As a result, dialogic art, and other kinds of relational practice that find expression through dialogic forms are going to have to work *harder* to self-realise as contemporary art. This will involve taking up a position in relation to art as autonomous. It’s all very well for John to *say* the autonomy of art is a myth, but what evidence can we marshal to support this claim—and by this I mean *compelling* evidence that might debunk the hegemony of this autonomy, while at the same time fortifying the status of dialogic art as art.

Hillary Murphy: So, an art that’s grounded in a different epistemology and ontology. Yes, I can see what you mean.

Marsha Bradfield: What you’re saying is really interesting, Ella, because you seem to be suggesting that dialogic art could engage in the ongoing discussion around art’s autonomy by enacting itself in a way that *critiques* this very definition of art. Is that correct?

Ella Stone: *Oui!* Yes, I think so—and I’ll come back to that. Now, politics, they say, makes for strange bedfellows. Collaboration in contemporary art, too. So, to explore the question, ‘What does it mean to collaborate in dialogic art?’ I want to draw on critic and theorist John Roberts’s theory of collective collaboration. I suggest this is an unlikely choice—a strange bedfellow—for dialogic art. Roberts, like Bishop, holds fast to art as ontologically autonomous; he




Duchamp's Sister

@CassyAppadurai

ES: DA is an example of post-autonomous practice. #diacamp

Expand

5s



What is dialogic art

@DialogicArt

#diacamp Are Roberts's and other Marxist approaches more or less relevant under advanced capitalism?

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now



Duchamp's Sister

@CassyAppadurai

ES: JR holds that the de-alienated labour of artistic collab. = model for de-alienation of socialized labour. #diacamp

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now



Duchamp's Sister

@CassyAppadurai

JJ: JR's theory is idealistic. #diacamp

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now

considers autonomy a necessary *condition* of art’s existence in the world.⁹ This notwithstanding, I sense that dialogic art, as a *post*-autonomous practice, has much to learn from Roberts’s theory.

John Johnson: Okay, so now we’re talking about dialogic art as *post*-autonomous.¹⁰
Ella Stone: Well, isn’t it? Isn’t it an art practice that draws attention to itself as conspicuously collaborative in ways that *outstretch* art as an autonomous sphere? Engaging what this collaboration means is the purpose of dialogic art, on Brian’s and my understanding. Isn’t that right, Brian?

John Johnson: Listen, I may be putting words in your mouth here, Ella, but your point is that you’re busting the myth of art’s autonomy by acknowledging all the ways in which dialogic art is *not* autonomous, or at least dependent on a wide range of authors, including the institutions of art, art history, tradition, etcetera? Is *that* it?

Ella Stone: *Oui! Bien sûr!* For Bishop, art’s autonomy safeguards it against doing other kinds of work, such as social work *à la* Oda Projesi.¹¹ In Roberts’s case, social work is *precisely* what he hopes collective collaboration can accomplish as autonomous—albeit a different *kind* of social work than what Bishop finds so unseemly and disorienting.

In contrast with Bishop, Roberts believes that, mmm, insulated against the instrumental rationality of capitalism, collective collaboration can, among other things, ‘reflect on the division of labour from inside the social relations of art’.¹² And I should say that the larger argument in his essay, ‘Collaboration as a Problem of Art’s Cultural Form’¹³ which is the text I’ll focus on here, contends that the de-alienated labour of artistic collaboration can provide a ‘model for the de-alienation of socialized labour’.¹⁴ It’s about acheiving de-alienated labour through a *convergence* of art as collective practice and collectivised labour. Do you see how I might take this to indicate the emancipatory potential of this collaborative practice—how it offers an alternative to familiar models of production marked by the division of labour under capitalism?

John Johnson: Seriously? Look, Ella, no disrespect. But of all the theories of collaboration that you could have chosen to explore dialogic art, you opted for one that, just based on what you’ve said *so far*, is almost surely flawed in two regards.

Ella Stone: And these two regards are, John?

John Johnson: Okay, well, look, to begin with, it’s untenable in practice. I mean, ‘insulated against the instrumental rationality of capitalism’—really? Show me an art practice that enjoys this kind of privilege and I’ll give you a million pounds.

Ella Stone: Is that a promise? But, seriously—the other way this theory is flawed is—?

John Johnson: Okay, because it overdetermines art and collaboration—collaborative art. Look, the idea of art achieving ‘de-alienated labour through a convergence of art as collective practice and collectivised labour’—that’s a big ask! Too big—because, the point is, it sets collaborative art up to *fail*.

Marsha Bradfield: Ella, perhaps it would help if you could give us an example of this ‘collective collaboration’.




Allison Allie Jones @AllisonAllieJon

16s

#diacamp JJ: What constitutes ‘the work’ in JR’s collect. collab? Good question for DA, too.

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Krista Wiseman @KristaWiseman1

10m

What does Robers say about the day-to-day organisation of collective collaboration? #diacamp

Expand



What is dialogic art @DialogicArt

now

#diacamp So what’s the difference between a lab and a workshop?

Expand



What is dialogic art @DialogicArt

24s

Don’t they both bring together workers with different skills? Explain, please.

Expand Reply Delete Favorite

Ella Stone:

Bien sûr—the Bauhaus.

John Johnson:

The Bauhaus?

Ella Stone:

Mais oui. Collective collaboration, on Roberts’s understanding, brings collaborators together from different disciplines into a ‘laboratory model’. In Roberts’s opinion, this way of working achieves de-alienated labour through ‘a convergence between art as collective practice and collectivised labour’, and the convergence overcomes the divide between manual and intellectual labour.¹⁵

John Johnson:

Okay, what evidence does he offer to support this claim?

Ella Stone:

Well, this isn’t something he really explores.

John Johnson:

Right. No surprise there.

Ella Stone:

Oui. But this notwithstanding, I *do* think Roberts’s theory of collective collaboration throws up some, mmm, considerations that we should at least keep in mind when it comes to dialogic art. And I’m especially interested in his claim that collective collaboration is distinguished by a specific mode or representation, one that recalls KK’s discussion. On Roberts’s account, ‘the socially produced character of the art is made explicit *in* the form of the work’.¹⁶

David Rooksby:

Whoa, Ella, slow down! That’s a lot to process—like what do you mean by, ‘*in* the form of the work’. Or, I guess, what does Roberts mean?

John Johnson:

Exactly. I was wondering about this, too. Okay, so is it ‘the work’ that occurs as the collaboration that produces an outcome? Is *this* ‘the work’? The labour in the process—in which case, it would really be the practice of collective collaboration? Or is ‘the work’ the ‘artwork’ or some other outcome?¹⁷ Look, what exactly are we talking about here? What does this collective collaboration involve? And I’m also interested in the tweet about the challenges of the collaboration’s day-to-day *organisation*.

Ella Stone:

Well, first, let me say that it’s worth noting of Roberts that there are, of course, many alternatives to collective collaboration—like what he calls the, mmm, ‘artisanal model of teamwork’ that supports the ‘post-Warholian artist as editor/appropriationist/ideas-manager’¹⁸ in retaining their *sole* authorship. He gives the examples of Damien Hirst and Jeff Koons. Their art is produced by factories of artisans, whose authorship is effaced by Hirst’s and Koons’s signatures.¹⁹

Anne Lang:

Allors, collective collaboration in Roberts’s understanding is quite different from this. To begin with, it is social in a specific sense. It brings collaborators together from different disciplines into the laboratory model with the intention of producing an outcome that acknowledges the sociality of their collaborative authorship.²⁰ Do you see?

Ella Stone:

No, not really. ‘The sociality of their collective authorship’? Are you asking if this is something that Roberts explores in depth? The answer is no. But I take it to mean that the artwork draws attention to itself as socially produced—collaborative in a *conspicuous* way.

John Johnson:

But Roberts doesn’t offer any details.



Ella Stone: *Non, c’est vraie.* So, when earlier I said that an outcome generated thorough collective collaboration on Roberts’s account results in *the socially produced character of the art being made explicit in the form of the work*, I should have added that ‘work’ in this instance refers to the ‘artwork’ as an outcome of the collaborative process.

John Johnson: Based on what?

Ella Stone: Well, elsewhere in Roberts’s paper, he speaks about the ‘labour *in* the artwork being made conspicuous and critical’.²¹ And it’s this, more than anything else, this interest in producing an artwork in which its collaborative labour and socially produced character—indeed, *the socially produced character of its collaborative labour*—that is made *conspicuous* and *critical*, *oui*, this is what I wish to focus on here. I would like to think this is an interest, or perhaps, a *commitment*, that dialogic art shares with collective collaboration.

Marsha Bradfield: Could you say more about your sense that dialogic art makes the socially produced character of collaborative labour explicit?

Ella Stone: *Mais oui.* Consider this barcamp. Doesn’t it place its interlocutors in a critical exchange that might result in the possible, mmm, alignment of their interests, skills and proficiencies? In a way, isn’t this barcamp a kind of *laboratory*? Do we, the interlocutors, not bring our respective resources to bear on, ‘What is dialogic art?’ as we experiment with different ways of exploring this question? Does each contributor not approach it from a different perspective? I’m interested in dialogic projects that make their interlocutors’ contributions conspicuous and critical while also attempting to understand the socially produced character of this labour from the collaborator’s respective perspectives.

Cassy Appadurai: Ella, let me try and summarise what you’ve proposed so far. Earlier, you said that dialogic art has much to learn from collective collaboration. But, from the sounds of it, the situation is slightly different. It’s more like collective collaboration identifies an *ambition* that you think dialogic art might *share*. This is to make the socially produced character of a dialogic practice or project conspicuous and critical in an artwork as an outcome of this *activity*—for lack of a better word.

David Rooksby: That’s a tongue twister, isn’t it.

Ella Stone: *Oui*, Cassy. *Très bien.*

Cassy Appadurai: And then you went on to say something to the effect that you’re interested in dialogic projects that make their interlocutors’ contributions conspicuous and critical while *also* attempting to understand the socially produced character of this labour from the collaborators’ individual perspectives. Have I captured what you’re getting at?

Ella Stone: Yes! Yes! Very much so! *Formidable!*

Cassy Appadurai: So it’s not *just* a question of *making explicit* the *socially produced character of a dialogic artwork* in its *outcome*. It’s about *picturing* this sociality from the collaborators’ *respective* points of view. Is that it?

Ella Stone: *Oui. Exactement.*

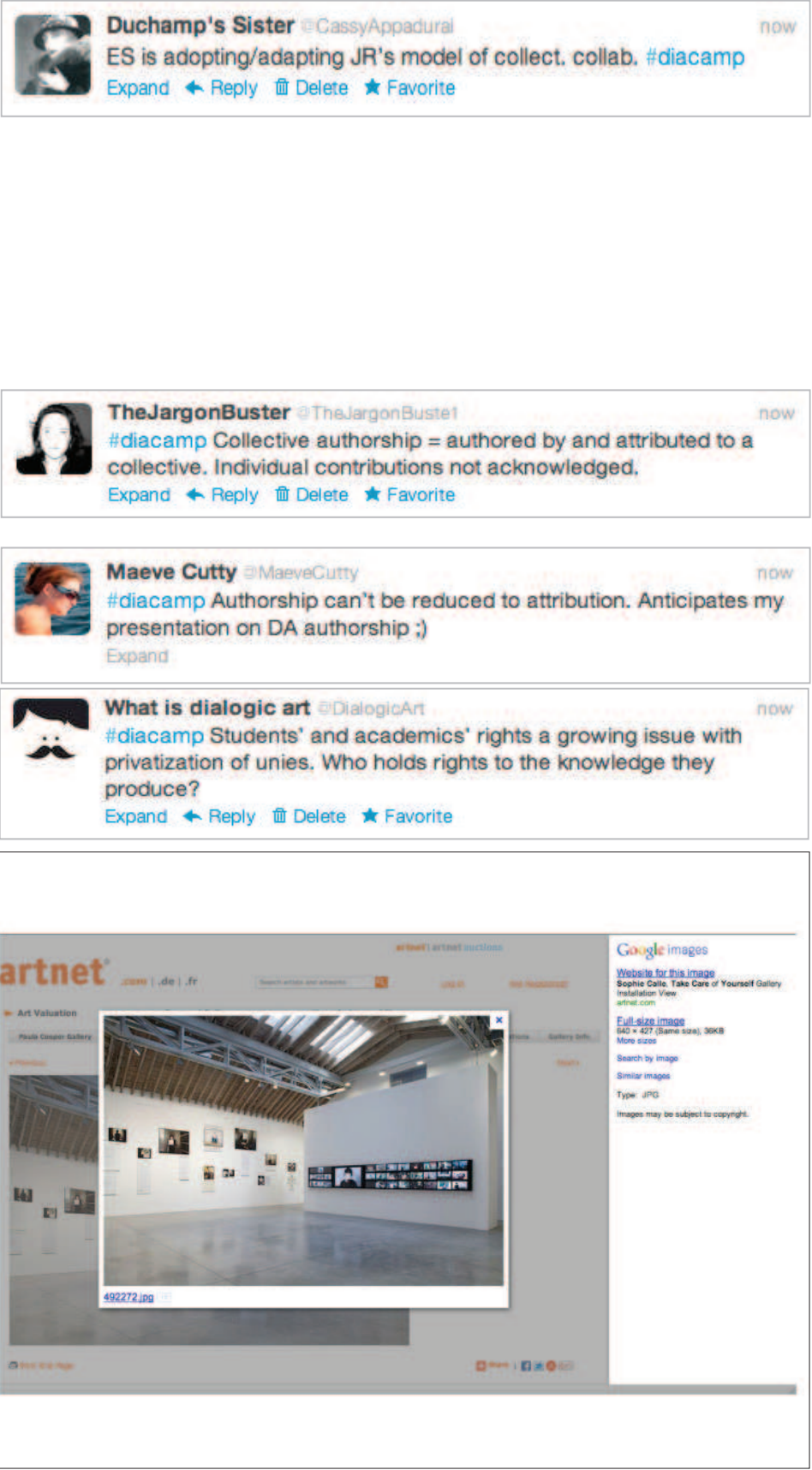


Fig. 4.1

Marsha Bradfield: Ella, could you give us an example of a dialogic artwork like the kind you’re thinking about? I know you’ve mentioned the barcamp, but, how about an *artwork* that’s uncontentious in its status, well, its status as *art*? What you’re describing sounds quite different from either *Chantier Barbès-Rochecouart* or the artwork John spoke about, the one that used storytelling?

Ella Stone: *Oui*, I can do that, *bien sûr*. But first, if I may make one additional point? You’ll recall that Allison spoke, in her introductory comments, about fine art adopting and adapting methods from other disciplines. What Cassy’s excellent summary—if I may say, Cassy, what you were saying just now—draws into view is that I’m *adopting* Roberts’s model of collective collaboration for dialogic art based on my conviction that they share an interest in the socially produced character of the art being made explicit in the form of the work. But, as Allison said, I’m *adapting* this model, too. I’m suggesting that, instead of this art foregrounding *disciplinary contributions*, as in the Bauhaus’s collective authorship, dialogic art might *adapt* this approach by foregrounding the contributions of *individual interlocutors*.

John Johnson: Hang on! What do you mean by ‘disciplinary contributions’?

Ella Stone: *Bien*, I mean the idea that an artwork produced by the Bauhaus’s laboratory model brings together contributions from ceramics, woodworking, stained glass, *etcetera*, under the mantle of collective authorship.

Cassy Appadurai: But the Bauhaus wasn’t collective in its authorship, was it? I mean, we often hear about so-and-so being a member of the Bauhaus.

Ella Stone: Actually, the Bauhaus *did* subscribe to collective authorship. I also know from a source, beyond Roberts’s paper, that this wasn’t always easy to maintain. Students didn’t hold rights to their work produced while attending the Bauhaus, and all work made with materials supplied by the institution remained its property.²² Yet the Bauhaus ‘masters’, as the tutors were called, retained *their* rights.

Clark Chris: Ha! Maybe collective collaboration is closer to the rackets of Koons and Hirst than Roberts would like to admit.

Ella Stone: *C’est vraie, peut être*. The students tried to contest this. And do you know that in 1924, seventeen of them sent a letter to Walter Gropius, who was the head at that time? Basically, they wanted the Bauhaus to refrain from publishing designs under the institution’s collective authorship. The students, by the way, were unsuccessful in their protest.²³

Marsha Bradfield: So attribution is something a dialogic artwork would approach differently? It would be very good to understand how the interlocutors’ contributions compose and are made explicit in the outcome, Ella.

Ella Stone: *Oui, bien sûr*. Take the example of Sophie Calle’s *Take Care of Yourself*. I don’t have a slide so I’ll just google it and show you a few images online.

Allison Jones: Ella, are you seriously suggesting this is an example of collective collaboration?

Ella Stone: *Non*, not quite. I’m suggesting that the socially produced character of the art is made explicit in the form of the work. Did some of you see this at the



Fig. 4.2

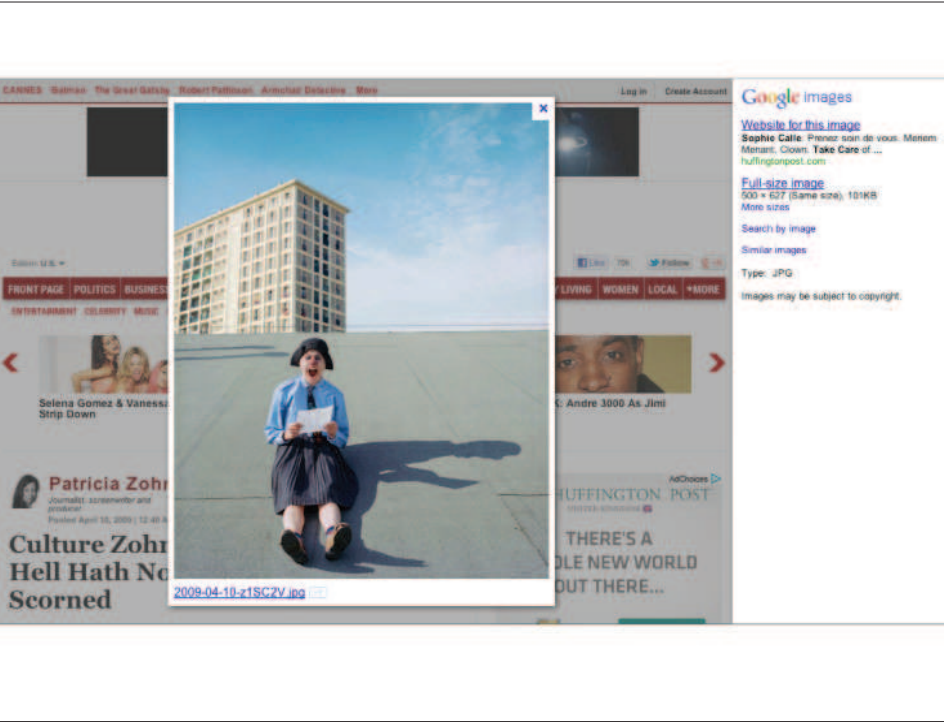
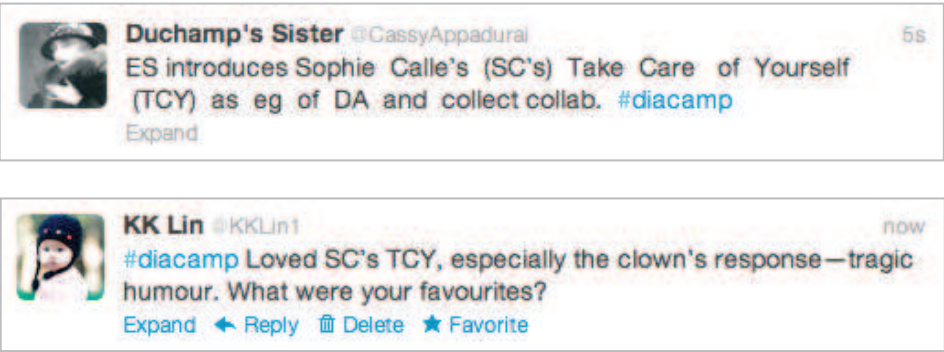


Fig. 4.3

Whitechapel Gallery in 2009?²⁴ For those of you who are unfamiliar with this artwork or who missed it, *Take Care of Yourself* comes together as a large-scale, room-sized installation, with images, texts, objects and video.

Voilà. Here is some documentation. (4.1) So the entire project stems from a ‘Dear Jane’ email that artist Calle apparently received from a jilted lover—or, I suppose more correctly, a lover who jilted her. The lover’s email to her concludes with the line, ‘Take care of yourself’. What, Calle wonders, does this *really* mean? And she goes about exploring it by giving copies of the email to 107 women and asking them to interpret it and respond in light of their professional expertise. You may not be able to see this in the documentation, but the responses range from singing and dancing to clowning and analysing. Each respondent uses distinct formal as well as analytical and rhetorical strategies to make sense of the phrase. (Fig. 4.2)

Allison Jones:
John Johnson:
Ella Stone:

How is this a *dialogic artwork*?
How is it an instance of *collective collaboration*?
Alors, à commencer—to begin, it brings together a proliferation of responses. *Take Care of Yourself* is a caconn—sorry—a cacophony of voices and interpretations. This dovetails with Clark’s earlier comments about audit culture. You know, curators often discuss the range of audience response to an artwork, an exhibition, an event and so on.²⁵ But do you see how Calle’s artwork inverts this to a certain degree as a range of responsive interpretations that all sound on top of each other—a *polyphony*? So when you encounter the artwork, you find yourself immersed in this—what’s the word?—*din*. As you engage with some responses and not others—after all, to appreciate the installation in its entirety takes time—you place some of the responses in dialogue.

John Johnson:

Okay, so these responses produce the dialogue through each viewer’s engagement. Does this mean we’re *back* to *spatiotemporal dialogues* as an organising principle? My point is, I thought we decided that, on its own, this was an insufficient basis for dialogic art.

Ella Stone:

Oui, I understand your concern. But these spatiotemporal dialogues further the literal one initiated by Calle’s breakup.

John Johnson:

Okay, let’s say, for the sake of argument, that I can accept that. Fine. But how does this exemplify an instance of *collective collaboration*?

Ella Stone:

That’s a very good question, John. The artwork, you see, makes *explicit* its socially produced character, with the respondents’ responses finding *voice* in the very fabric of the project. Going back to Roberts’s laboratory model, it’s interesting, don’t you think, to consider *Take Care of Yourself* from the perspective of disciplinary alignment, which is paramount to his theory of collective collaboration.²⁶ The artwork brings together collaborators from wide-ranging disciplines—doctors and dancers and so on—and all of their personal responses are mediated through their professional expertise. Here’s another image. This is a detail of the clown reading the letter. (Fig 4.3)

David Rooksby:

So there were 108 women involved in this project?

I have been meaning to write and reply to your² last e-mail for a while. At the same time, I thought it would be better to talk to you and tell you what I have to say out loud. Still, at least it will be written.

As you have noticed, I have not been quite right recently. As if I no longer recognised myself in my own existence. A³ terrible feeling of anxiety, which I cannot really fight, other than keeping on going to try and overtake it, as I always have done.

When we met you laid down one condition : not to become the “fourth”. I stood by that promise : it has been months now since I have seen the “others”, because I obviously could find no way of seeing them without making you one of them.

I thought that would be enough, I thought that loving you and your love would be enough so that this anxiety – “which constantly drives me to look further afield and which means I will never feel quiet and at rest⁴ or probably even just happy or “generous” – would be calmed when I was with you, with the certainty that the love you have for me was the best for me, the best I have ever had, you know that. I thought that my writing would be a remedy, that my “disquiet” would dissolve into it so that I could find you. But no. In fact it even became worse, I cannot even tell you the sort of state I feel I am in⁵. So I started calling the “others” again this week. And I know what that means to me and the cycle that it will drag me into.

I have never lied to you and I do not intend to start lying now.

There was another rule that you laid down at the beginning of our affair : the day we stopped being lovers you would no longer be able to envisage seeing me⁶. You know this constraint can only ever strike me as disastrous, and unjust (when you still see B and R...) and understandable (obviously...) ; so I can never become your friend. But now you can gauge how significant my decision is from the fact that I am prepared to bend to your will, even though there are so many things – “not seeing you or talking to you or catching the way you look at people and things, and your gentleness towards me – that I will miss terribly.

Whatever happens, remember that I will always love you in the same way, my own way, I have ever since I first met you ; “that it will carry on within me and, I am sure, will never die. But it would be the worst kind of masquerade to prolong a situation now when, you know as well as I do, it has become irreparable by the standards of the very love I have for you and you have for me, a love which is now forcing me to be so frank with you, as final proof of what happened between us and will always be unique⁷.

I would have liked things to have turned out differently.

Take care of yourself.

Fig. 4.4

- Ella Stone:

Oui.
- David Rooksby:

How many of them can you name—aside from Calle? Go ahead and google the press and see how many *other* women pop up. I’ve been at it for the last five minutes and guess what? None. Or maybe they’re all named ‘Sophie Calle’. Is she some kind of mega brand or something?
- Ella Stone:

Calle *does* acknowledge the respondents by name, some of them by first and last names, some of them just by their first names.²⁷
- David Rooksby:

But going back to John’s problem: I don’t see how this is collective collaboration in light of what you said. What am I missing?
- Ella Stone:

You’re taking issue with the attribution of this artwork to Calle?
- David Rooksby:

Yeah.
- John Johnson:

Okay, look—I can’t see how Calle’s artwork is an example of collective collaboration because it’s not even collectively authored.
- Ella Stone:

Granted, the artwork’s authorship isn’t collective in a *literal* sense. It’s not attributed to the 108 women under a shared name like ‘the Bauhaus’.
- David Rooksby:

Unless ‘Sophie Calle’ is the group’s name!
- Ella Stone:

But *Take Care of Yourself* isn’t only authored by Calle.
- John Johnson:

But, look, is this project even *collaborative*? Are the respondents collaborators? Did they have input on the project’s format? Do they have authorial rights and, if so, to what extent? I mean, could they take *Take Care of Yourself* on tour?
- Ella Stone:

Je ne sais pas, mais—I doubt it.
- John Johnson:

Absolutely not! These women are *not* collaborators. They’re *participants* in Calle’s project, by Beech’s definition—they ‘take part’ and ‘have to share’.²⁸ I know from reading an interview with Calle that she had very strict rules that were set in advance. She asked the respondents to address the letter from their professional perspectives. She didn’t want the women expressing any kind of sentiment on her behalf. They were briefed to speak from a personal-professional point of view²⁹ but not one that acknowledges Calle’s own experience of being dumped. The point is, personalised empathy like this wasn’t part of the deal.
- And, look, in this interview Calle describes the line in the email, ‘take care of yourself,’ as being a kind of directive from her lover³⁰—who isn’t named, by the way, in the artwork. Is this to protect his identity or to deny him authorial rights? It’s a classic case of passing the buck. Calle takes, ‘take care of yourself’ as a directive she felt *compelled* to obey. And she says that her way of *taking care of herself* was to answer her lover with the women’s responses.³¹
- Shadworth Dyson:

Is this ‘passing the buck’ or an instance of a dialogic artwork organised as a chain of call and response?
- Ella Stone:

Here is an image of the email. (Fig. 4.4) John, do you think, perhaps, we need to be careful about saying that Calle ‘answers’ her lover with the women’s responses? Would you not agree that the women are responding on Calle’s behalf and by way of their own experience?



Duchamp's Sister

@CassyAppadurai

Are the respondents in TCS collaborators or participants? #diacamp

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4s



Duchamp's Sister

@CassyAppadurai

JJ: Why is SC's lover not named in TCY—to protect his identity or deny him authorial rights? #diacamp

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7s



Ad Man Can

@DavidRooksby

#diacamp How about TCY being authored by a collective named 'The Dumped'?

Expand

15s



Phil Hind

@PhilHind1

#diacamp We might say the responses are 'networked' through the email.

Expand Reply Delete Favorite

8s



Duchamp's Sister

@CassyAppadurai

ED compares Sophie Calle and Dostoevsky. #diacamp

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now



Duchamp's Sister

@CassyAppadurai

SD: MMB says that Dostoevsky is 'an artist of an idea'. Does this

Expand

7s



Duchamp's Sister

@CassyAppadurai

make him the original conceptual artist? #diacamp

Expand

25s

John Johnson:

I also read Calle’s interview with Louise Neri. You’ll recall that Calle says that even though she didn’t *approve* of all the respondents’ interpretations, she didn’t censor any aspects of what the women gave her.³²

Okay, but is this a case of tolerating difference to the extent that it gets Calle’s needs met as an artist? It’s the women who are taking care of Calle. The point is, how is this being reciprocated?

Ella Stone:

Can you not see the email as a pretext for the women to explore the very human experience of having a relationship end on someone else’s terms—and the forced closure implied in the phrase, ‘take care of yourself’?

John Johnson:

Okay, it’s therapy in public. More social work—only aestheticised as a slickly produced installation. Nothing too revealing—or compromising. It’s what I call ‘charming’ art.

Maybe this *is* a dialogic artwork, Ella, but *it’s definitely not an instance of collective collaboration on Roberts’s account*, at least not according to your description. You said that, in the case of collective collaboration, the artwork is produced through a laboratory model. But these women responded to the letter individually. Their responses are *monadic*, single units. The point is, if collective collaboration is what you’re after, why not stage a self-help group—a support session for the dumped—where they can commiserate? Have a good moan and interpret it from different professional perspectives.

Shadworth Dyson:

If I may interject here, the respondents may well appear to be *monadic*, but let us not forget they all responded to the email and are therefore linked together by this relation. I can imagine these 108 responses could provide a great deal of insight into a very common but nevertheless difficult interpersonal experience, and it seems to me there is a very useful comparison to be made between—what was the artist’s name?

Ella Stone:

Sophie Calle.

Shadworth Dyson:

Sophie Calle and *Dostoevsky*.

John Johnson:

Seriously?

Shadworth Dyson:

Bakhtin is fascinated by Dostoevsky’s dialogic authorship, which he describes as ‘polyphonic’,³³ and which accords with Ella’s description of *Take Care of Yourself* as multi-voiced. In polyphonic texts, the author activates a plurality of perspectives, which may or may not entail a clash of languages, as in the case of heteroglossia, and Bakhtin holds that Dostoevsky is ‘an artist of an idea’³⁴ with his novels tracing ideas as they circulate among characters. Earlier, someone used the word ‘protagonist’; Bakhtin’s word is ‘hero’.³⁵ The heroes in Dostoevsky’s novels communicate with each other, transferring their thoughts, feelings and impressions—which move and are taken up in their minds, bodies and souls—and with this transfer, these things are penetrated by the heroes’ psychological understanding, which then animates them from the inside out.³⁶


David Rooksby:

Say what?

Shadworth Dyson:

Well, then. Allow me to explain by way of example. There is an exemplar of this transference—this transmission—in *Crime and Punishment*. You’ll soon


167



Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai3s

#diacamp SD: Dostoevsky's artistic form is 'a sociology of consciousness'. Why not consciousnesses?

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Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai7s

Another Hegelian idea lurking?

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Maeve Cutty @MaeveCuttynow

#diacamp It's not the women who come together in TCY but their responses—texts. Foregrounds textuality—text not the same as authors.

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Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppaduralnow

ES: JR uses term 'collective spontaneous subjectivity' to describe shared subjectivity in collect. collab. #diacamp

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Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppaduralnow

ES likens 'collective spontaneous subjectivity' to erupting with joy. Sounds like collective ecstasy.

Expand



Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai5s

Sign me up! #diacamp

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Tina Wiseman:

Marsha Bradfield:

Allison Jones:

Marsha Bradfield:

Ella Stone:

Brian Updike:

Ella Stone:

John Johnson:

Ella Stone:

John Johnson:

understand why Calle’s email made me think of it. You see, poor Raskolnikov, poor fellow, receives a tortuous letter from his mother. That woman bangs on about the sacrifices that his sister must make for his well-being, in what I can only describe as³⁷ one of the most spectacular guilt trips in modern literature, and it is, in part, this letter that drives Raskolnikov to follow through with his plot to—well, I won’t spoil it for those who’ve yet to read this classic. But Calle’, artwork, Ella—well, it occurs to me the phrase, ‘take care of yourself’ circulates in ways that draw out its *inter-individuality* as well as intersubjectivity. The presuppositions rolled into this sentiment are dialogised through a communion of consciousnesses³⁸—this being the 108 responses—and I would like to think that Calle draws out this communion in much the same fashion Dostoevsky does. I use those words deliberately—*they draw this out!* As Raskolnikov meditates on his mother’s words, we *hear* her speaking in his thoughts, and as the women meditate on the letter, we *hear, see, even feel* their personalised responses, which reverberate with other voices, including their professional expertise. Bakhtin insists there is no such thing as an idea, in itself, in a Platonic sense—at least, as far as Dostoevsky is concerned—and, in fact, Bakhtin describes Dostoevsky’s artistic form as a ‘sociology of consciousness’,³⁹ which, based on what you’ve been saying, Ella, seems similar to what can be said of Calle’s *Take Care of Yourself*.

But these women aren’t *characters* in a novel, Shadworth. They are historical people—*flesh-and-blood respondents* in Calle’s project.

Shadworth, I’m taken with the idea of *Take Care of Yourself* as ‘a sociology of consciousness’. There’s something fascinating about the shared subjectivity that I felt was achieved through Calle’s installation when I encountered it. I was immersed in all those voices, all those forms—all that *labour*. I guess I’m saying that I experienced something like a sense of solidarity with these women. I could identify with them and their experience, in light of my own life experience.

What does this say about your romantic history?

But haven’t we all been dumped or had a relationship end abruptly?

Moi-même, not yet—but I suppose there’s still time!


Don’t look at me in that tone of voice.

Ha! But, seriously, on the matter of subjectivity—Roberts speculates that the de-alienated labour achieved through models like collective collaboration can engender what he calls, mmm, ‘a collective spontaneous subjectivity’.⁴⁰ Although, I should be clear, this isn’t something he explores in depth.

Okay, no surprise there.

I understand your concern, John, but—what’s the expression—reading between the lines, Roberts seems to imply this subjectivity is realised as individual collaborators subordinate their will to a collective one. This surrender of agency is then returned to them through a sense of collective subjectivity, which erupts from within the joy of de-alienated labour.

Seriously!?



Duchamp's Sister

@CassyAppadurai

now

ES: Concerns around 'alienation' on collaborative practice, and how it might be masked by collectivity (?) #diacamp

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Duchamp's Sister

@CassyAppadurai

3s

ES: Must one surrender individuality to experience solidarity? #diacamp

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Duchamp's Sister

@CassyAppadurai

6s

ES: In JR's view, collect. collab. = space to reflect on labour relations in art. What about labour relations beyond art? #diacamp

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Duchamp's Sister

@CassyAppadurai

now

ES: 'Alienation' can't be reduced to effects of capitalism.

Expand



Duchamp's Sister

@CassyAppadurai

41s

ES wants to avoid Marxist-- determinism or essentialism (?) #diacamp

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Allison Allie Jones

@AllisonAllieJon

now

#diacamp ES: 'Couldn't DA engage alienation by making the contributions of individual interlocutors explicit in DA AW?'

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Ella Stone: I have to confess, John, this part doesn't sit well with me, either. The collective subjectivity that Roberts indicates *may* overcome the alienating effects of the division of labour; but, then again, this pretense for collaboration may, in fact, mask alienation in the production process. Does this make anyone else wonder—John, does it make you wonder—what possibilities there might be for acknowledging a wider range of alienation than Roberts allows?

John Johnson: Such as?

Ella Stone: Such as, well, mmm. *Bien sûr*, working collectively can produce a sense of solidarity.

Krista Wiseman: Yes, of course it can. I know from working with other activists that solidarity can be *sooo* empowering when it feels like you *are* the group—all in it *together*.

Ella Stone: *Oui, mais*, does one have to surrender their individual voice to achieve this togetherness? Isn't there value in recognising the contributions of individual collaborators as situated and specific, as Calle does? Could this be a way of overcoming feelings of alienation that might result when the collaborators' labour—by which I mean, their responses—are absorbed into a group response, as is the case in collective authorship?

Krista Wiseman: It's no good fetishising de-alienated labour in art or collective subjectivity until we overhaul social relations. Nothing is going to change until we dismantle capitalism.

Ella Stone: Roberts would agree with you about the need to change social relations, Krista—hence, he embraces collective collaboration as a space in which to reflect on the labour relations in art. He critiques relational aesthetics and collaborative groups like Critical Art Ensemble for dissolving artistic technique into social praxis. He believes it's ineffectual unless accompanied by *actual* changes in property relations, which would result in the reconfiguration of social relations in a substantive way.⁴¹

But, for me, I don't think that alienation can be reduced to the effects of capitalism. Is it not a condition of working collectively, regardless? And, this being the case, couldn't dialogic art engage this by making the contributions of individual interlocutors explicit in dialogic artworks?

John Johnson: So you think that by *attributing* authorship to individual collaborators, dialogic artworks will *stave off* feelings of alienation? It seems to me that you're then conflating alienation with the expropriation of labour and that's too—

Ella Stone: John, please do not misunderstand me. Recognising the need for attribution, well, I don't see it as a, mmm, panacea. But I *do* think this recognition—recognising this *need* for attribution—might at least open up space to explore alienation and other effects that occur when we deny this need. And this is a process that begins, necessarily, with unhinging alienation from the exclusive purview of capitalist labour relations.

John Johnson: In Marxist dogma.

Anne Lang: Ella, could you say how you're defining 'alienation'?



Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai

SD: MMB's theory of authorship, 'finalization' is a condition for response. #diacamp

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now



Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai

PH: Emile Durkheim's critique of Marxism. Division of labour not always alienating. #diacamp

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now



What is dialogic art @DialogicArt

#diacamp Re Marxism and subjectivity—

Expand

now



What is dialogic art @DialogicArt

more nuanced accounts than JR's by post-Marxist thinkers. See Lytoard, Deleuze & Guattari, Hart & Negri.

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8s



TheJargonBuster @TheJargonBuste1

Commodity fetishism = Marxist theory that under capitalism, people objectify their social relations - treat each other like things. #diacamp

Expand

5s

Ella Stone: Bien sûr. I see it as a social phenomenon—estrangement from something of importance to a subject, including their work. We might think, very generally, of the four kinds of alienation Marx identifies in *The Paris Manuscripts*. First, there is alienation from the project that a worker produces; second, alienation through the impersonalisation of labour; third, alienation from the human race; and, finally, alienation from other human beings.⁴² And, of course, these forms of alienation are interrelated. In the case of collective collaboration, it seems to me the collaborators’ collective subjectivity is prioritised *over* their individual fulfillment. I suppose I’m interested in how it is that collective collaboration, which I understand as a context for exploring the creation of common life through cultural production, might actually result in the exact *opposite* of what it aims to achieve when collaborators feel alienated from what they produce.

Shadworth Dyson: Bakhtin would say that something *like* estrangement is fundamental to authorship, that an author must finalise his work by externalising it and making it available for response—that, quite simply, there is no authorship without this separation.⁴³

Phil Hind: Yes, yes, of course. It’s all interesting but, well, I *really* don’t think this is the right time to debate the ins and outs of alienation and its effects. So I’ll just say in passing that the division of labour doesn’t *always* result in alienation—provided that the workers, or group, are regularly in contact with each other and ‘consecrate’ their relations with authority.⁴⁴ That’s how Emile Durkheim puts it in his critique of Marx’s theory of alienation. The lesson there is that the workers need to *authorise* their own labour relations—it simply makes good sense that it can’t be done for them by anyone else.

Clark Chris: Ella, I would agree there is a *range* of alienations in collaborative practice, and that we’d benefit from drilling down to better understand this. I’m not an expert in Marxism, alright. But *I’d* wager that arguments like Roberts’s may *downplay* issues around subjectivity because orthodox Marxism is a largely *objective* theoretical system—it’s more preoccupied with social facts⁴⁵ than *subjective* experience, if you see what I mean.

And I just don’t see how you can attribute utterances to individual interlocutors *and* hold onto collective collaboration as a *Marxist* or, for that matter, a *Communist theory* of collaborative art practice. I mean, doesn’t this attribution shore up ownership—the sense that says, ‘This is *mine* and that’s *yours*’? It converts relations between the collaborators into property relations. It’s classic commodity fetishism! So if you are trying to advance this idea of attribution from a *Marxist* perspective, I’m afraid *you’ve* defeated *your* own argument.

Ella Stone: *C’est vraie*, that’s a valid perspective, Clark. But do you really think that observing the value in Marxist thinking means swallowing the paradigm in its entirety? Is it not more that Marx asks us to seek out alternatives to our current regime, and then work them out through practice to the best of our abilities and resources? Isn’t this what he meant when he said that ‘people



Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai

now

ES: DA = an approach that reckons with the very conditions of its existence. #diacamp

Expand



What is dialogic art @DialogicArt

4s

#diacamp Equal rights to collective output? An alternative

Expand



Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai

now

ES: A strength of TCY is that the responses are attributed to their author--respondents. #diacamp

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Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai

5s

Does the BC agree that TCY is a DAW? #diacamp

Expand



Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai

4s

As well as DAW being authored, authors themselves are authored. #diacamp

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What is dialogic art @DialogicArt

4s

#diacamp Equal rights to collective output? An alternative

Expand



What is dialogic art @DialogicArt

22s

=‘From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs’.

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make their history but not in the circumstances of their own making’?⁴⁶ I take this as a mandate to evolve something in the context in which we find ourselves, which most immediately and for the purposes of this barcamp is contemporary cultural production, is it not? I think KK was right to say there’s a politics at stake in the representational scheme of dialogic art—a politics that surely extends to its practice, too. And I think this politics entails reckoning with the very conditions and counter—*ah! Pardonnez-moi!*—contradictions of its existence. You understand, I trust, that I’m not saying that collective collaboration is an ideal approach. I’m just saying, I think we can gain insight by exploring the contradictions and limitations of Roberts’s models and trying to understand what significance they might have for dialogic art.

So, Clark, even if the authorship of *Take Care of Yourself* isn’t collective—even if it’s not authored under a group name—it’s authored by the 108 respondents, the 107 women and Calle, and all those encountering this artwork besides, is it not? The women’s dialogues with the letter—the 108 utterances they produce—not only *compose* the artwork, but they are also conspicuously attributed to their author-respondents. *And*, I think this connects to what KK was saying earlier about dialogic art exploring authorship as a collaborative process—a process that needs to be understood on a case-by-case basis by paying close attention to *how* the *author* is *authored*.

Tina Wiseman: As with the artwork, so with the *artist*. Sophie Calle is, herself, *authored* through this and her other artworks as well as our interpretation of them. We’ll return to the ways in which dialogic art *authors* subjectivity, in addition to the artwork, in our contribution this afternoon.

Maeve Cutty: I’m glad you brought this up, Tina. I’ll be considering the construction of the author in my talk, too. Maybe we could chat about it a bit over lunch, right?

John Johnson: Okay, that’s all well and good, but, to go back to what you were saying, Ella. I mean, does any of this really address the question, ‘What does it mean to collaborate in dialogic art?’

Marsha Bradfield: Well I think so! Assuming that we can agree that *Take Care of Yourself* is a dialogic artwork.

Phil Hind: The truth is, I have some reservations about this. Or at least I’m not sure of the extent to which the socially produced character of this artwork’s collaborative labour *is actually* made explicit. Granted, I didn’t see Calle’s artwork but I get the impression that it moves directly from the email to the responses, but what happened in between? Is there any discussion of the planning process in *Take Care of Yourself*? Does it consider problems with the project’s workflow? Does Calle’s artwork use a representational approach like the one that KK analysed in *Chantier Barbès-Rochechouart*? It’s reification of the construction process? That is, does it use a reflexive approach that indicates the labour that is necessarily *othered*⁴⁷ by the limitations of its representation?



Duchamp's Sister

@CassyAppadurai

now

JJ: JR's collect. collab. concerns collaborators having equal rights to what they produced collectively. #diacamp

Expand



Duchamp's Sister

@CassyAppadurai

now

AJ: TYC co-authored because Calle dependent on responses. Why couldn't she produce them on her own? #diacamp

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Duchamp's Sister

@CassyAppadurai

10m

We should be thinking about subjectivities and attributions overlapping in DA. #diacamp

Expand

- Ella Stone:

I agree, Phil, that *Take Care of Yourself* could have been more forthcoming in the ways you describe. *Bien sûr*.
- John Johnson:

Look, I thought the whole point of Roberts’s model of collective collaboration was to overcome the alienating effects of capitalism normalised by the division of labour and property relations, right? Well isn’t that the point? Okay, I haven’t read his essay. But from what I *know* about Roberts’s scholarship, and based on your *description* of collective collaboration, I naïvely assumed that, by ‘collaboration’, we were talking about a way of working that prioritises the collaborators’ equal rights to what they produced collectively. I mean, isn’t *that* the point of Roberts’s collective collaboration? I think that’s part of it, John, and I’ve also acknowledged this model isn’t ideal. It doesn’t consider a broad enough range of alienation or expropriation or the day-to-day dynamics of collaborative practice.
- Marsha Bradfield:

I’m wondering if the way of working together that John seems to be edging towards is more like ‘collectivity’ than ‘collaboration’? I’m thinking of Florian Schneider’s argument that collaboration should, in fact, be understood as an ambivalent process that is often negotiated through diverse and conflicted interests.⁴⁸
- John Johnson:

Okay, I thought we *were* talking about *collectivity*—*collective* collaboration. But it’s moot anyway, because collaboration in the form of collectivity isn’t even on offer in *Take Care of Yourself*. By following Calle’s rules, the women are subordinating their wills to hers, rather than exercising a collective will.
- Allison Jones:

But Calle is wholly dependent on the women’s responses. *Take Care of Yourself* simply would not exist without them. Calle invites the women to respond and—
- John Johnson:

Okay—so?
- Tina Wiseman:

The crux of Ella’s contribution, in my understanding, resides with the relationship she has established between authorial subjectivity and authorial representation in *Take Care of Yourself*. There is space here for self-expression that simply does not exist in collective authorship when a condition of this authorship is that it suppresses any recognition of a ‘self’ *doing* the expressing that’s not collective! I would suggest, John, based on Calle’s example, that it’s not simply a case of either-slash-or in dialogic art—*either* individual

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or collective subjectivity, *either* individual *or* collective attribution, *either* collaboration *or* collectivity. I would suggest that we should instead be thinking about ‘subjectivities’ and ‘attributions’ and multiple ways of working together, perhaps even trying to understand them as interdependent and overlapping?
- Allison Jones:

That could, in fact, be a really interesting facet of our research.
- John Johnson:

Right. That sounds like a pretty picture of liberal tolerance to me. At least *try* taking off your rose-tinted glasses, Tina.



- Allison Jones:

We’ll let that one pass, John. In addition to the questions, ‘What is dialogic art?’ and ‘What does it mean to collaborate in dialogic art?’ I think we should also be asking, ‘What are the subjectivities that accrete through the practice of dialogic art, and how do they overlap?’
- Cassy Appadurai:

I’d like to interject here. As the designated tweeter, I’ve been listening to the ebb and flow of this discussion and trying to capture key points so that those not in attendance might follow along.

For me, there’s a big question about the *barcamp*’s question, ‘What is dialogic art?’ and the ways it’s organising the discussion. Of course, addressing questions is productive. Of course it is. But is it the same thing as being *generative*? What I’m trying to suggest is that I’m unsure what is gained from celebrating *more* agencies, *more* subjectivities, *more* attributions, *more* ways of working together, *more* questions, *more* dialogues and *more* interlocutors with such *wild abandon*! It seems to me that it’s a bit like the inverse of the infinite regress that was mentioned earlier, only it’s a case of infinite *progress*. How is this discussion going to engage dialogic art in a substantial way if everyone keeps acknowledging the complexity of this art practice by formulating more questions about it?
- David Rooksby:

But the passage of life is not about answers, Cassy—either *giving* them or *getting* them. It’s about better *understanding* the questions so we can fashion richer and more profound ones.
- Cassy Appadurai:

From your tone of voice, I can only assume you’re being ironic, David. Thanks for the comic relief. But, at the very least, I want to *try* and understand what makes some questions sharper than others. Whilst this means grasping our basis for asking them, it also means we need to hypothesise what *yield* there might be by addressing them through practice.
- Allison Jones:

I think you’re suggesting we need to be more discerning in the questions we select to take forward. I would certainly agree with that—not to mention more rigorous in our engagement.
- Clark Chris:

What Cassy is saying goes back to what I was saying about dialogue breeding more dialogue, when left to its own devices.
- Cassy Appadurai:

Exactly. There is now not *one* but *four* big questions on the table, and countless little ones. The big ones seem to be: ‘What is dialogic art?’ but there’s also ‘What are the ethics of opacity?’ with this pointing to the issue of truthful representation that KK observed earlier. But now we’ve also got, ‘What does it mean to collaborate in dialogic art?’ and ‘What are the subjectivities that accrete [though I would say, are *produced*] through the practice of dialogic art?’ For sure, there’ll be more questions. *For sure*. But a few *answers*, in addition to responses along the way—even if they’re just placeholders in anticipation of deeper insight—would be good too. So I’m staging a mini-intervention.
- Krista Wiseman:

This is a mini-intervention?
- Cassy Appadurai:

Yes, but let me explain what it is before you dismiss it out of hand. Basically, it consists of reformulating our problem-question, ‘What is dialogic art?’ into



a problem-statement: ‘Dialogic art is [fill in the blank and solve for “x”]’. Of course, ‘x’ may be many things. But I’m wondering if this reformulation—which we might think of as a ‘dialogic tactic’ in this discussion—could re-situate or re-orient the thinking here by making our dialogic exchange a little more accountable for its reckoning. It might rein in the dialogue and harness it for more focused effect?

Clark Chris: I, for one, like the idea of deploying ‘the dialogic’ in this way.

Cassy Appadurai: Well, don’t you think there’s a need to push the envelope and inhabit the barcamp more critically by investigating how, as a mode of assembly, it’s organising forms of address?

Marsha Bradfield: I can get behind your intervention, Cassy.

Brian Updike: Absolutely—in fact, brilliant. And on that note, and in the spirit of your friendly intervention, I’m staging my own. I’m up next and, as time is of the essence, I’ll get on with it.

Marsha Bradfield: Of course, Brian. I apologise. I haven’t managed the discussion very well.

Brian Updike: Well, please don’t start now on my account! A little slack would be good.

Krista Wiseman: A little slack *would* be good. I have a suggestion. I know we’re rushed but, if we could just take a minute to get up and move, I think it would shift the energy in here, which has become—well, tense. Would everyone, would you just stand up—stand up, please. And just take three deep breaths. One . . . in and out; and two . . . in and out; and three . . . in and out. And now just roll your head a little and shake your shoulders, your arms, your legs. That’s much better. There’s nothing like a good body stretch to consolidate all our cognitive exercise.

Marsha Bradfield: And a clap? Could we thank Ella for her contribution?

[Barcamp claps.]

¹Grant Kester, *The One and the Many: Contemporary Collaborative Art in a Global Context* (London: Duke University Press, 2011), 1.

²Ibid., 2.

³Claire Bishop, ‘The Social Turn: Collaboration and its Discontents’, in *Right about Now: Art and Theory since the 1990s*, eds. Margriet Schavemaker and Mischa Rakier (Amsterdam: Valiz, 2007), 60.

⁴Ibid., Bishop writes, ‘The expanded field of relational practices currently goes under a variety of names: socially engaged art, community-based art, experiential communities, dialogic art, littoral art, participatory, interventionist, research-based, or collaborative art. These practices are less interested in a relational aesthetic than in the creative rewards of collaborative activity—whether in the form of working with pre-existing communities or establishing one’s own interdisciplinary network’.

⁵Ibid., 62.

⁶This thesis is also held by Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor Network Theory*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 5.

⁷Ibid., 61.

⁸Grant Kester, ‘Another Turn,’ *ArtForum* 44, no. 2 (May 2006): 23. Kester takes up Bishop’s narrow definition of art in his letter of response to her essay, ‘Collaboration and it’s Discontents,’ where she takes issue with Kester’s criticism (see Brian Updike’s barcamp contribution in this collation for discussion on Bishop’s criticism of Kester). In ‘Another Turn,’ Kester writes: ‘While otherwise quite keen to question the limits of discursive systems of meaning in her criticism, [Bishop] exhibits an unseemly enthusiasm for policing the boundaries of legitimate art practice. Rather than deploring the fact that some contemporary artists refuse to make the “right” kinds of work, she might consider the “uncomfortable” possibility that her own version of the aesthetic is simply one among many’.

⁹John Roberts, ‘Collaboration as a Problem of Art’s Cultural Form’, *Third Text* 18 (6, 2004): 563.

¹⁰See Mary Anne Francis, ‘Dirty Work: Art beyond “Autonomy”’, *Journal of Visual Arts Practice* 6, no. 1 (May 2007): 33–44 for a useful discussion on ‘post-autonomy’.

¹¹Claire Bishop, ‘The Social Turn: Collaboration and its Discontents’, 68.

¹²Roberts, ‘Collaboration as a Problem of Art’s Cultural Form’, 559.

¹³This reading of John Roberts’s ‘Collaboration as a Problem of Art’s Cultural From’ is informed by Mary Anne Francis’s, ‘Beyond Autonomy: Lecture Notes’, Mary Anne Francis <http://www.maryannefrancis.org/41.html> (accessed June 10, 2011).

¹⁴Roberts, ‘Collaboration as a Problem of Art’s Cultural Form’, 560.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, 558.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, 557.

¹⁷This question is raised by Mary Anne Francis in her lecture on Roberts’s essay. See Mary Anne Francis, ‘Beyond Autonomy: Lecture Notes’, Mary Anne Francis, <http://www.maryannefrancis.org/41.html> (accessed June 10, 2011).

¹⁸Roberts, ‘Collaboration as a Problem of Art’s Cultural Form’, 557–558.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, 558.

²⁰*Ibid.* Roberts writes: ‘These models of collaboration are social, therefore, in a precise sense: they offer a model of collective labour and connectivity across disciplines that exists in primary conjunction with the transformation of collective experience and the social world’.

²¹*Ibid.*, 564.

²²Magdalen Droste, ‘The Bauhaus Object between Authorship and Anonymity’, in *Bauhaus Construct: Fashioning Identity, Discourse and Modernism*, ed. Jeffery Saletnik and Robiv Schuldenfrei (Oxon: Routledge, 2009), 207.

²³*Ibid.*, 207–208.

²⁴Sophie Calle, *Sophie Calle: Talking to Strangers*, October 16, 2009–January 3, 2010, Whitechapel Gallery, London UK.

²⁵See, for instance, ‘1807 Commemorated: Learning from the Bicentenary: Audiences’, Institute for Understanding of the Past and the Institute of Historical Research, <http://www.history.ac.uk/1807commemorated/audiences/> (accessed June 1, 2012). Developed to help guide understanding of audience reception of eight exhibitions/museums portraying the history of British enslavement of Africans, this toolkit identifies discussion topics and aims to support the development and exhibition of the representational and interpretive aspects of curatorial practice more generally.

²⁶Roberts, ‘Collaboration as a Problem of Art’s Cultural Form’, 558. Roberts writes: ‘By collective mode of collaboration, I mean something closer to the ‘laboratory’ model of the early avant-garde (the Werkbund, the Bauhaus, Rodchenko’s Metfak faculty at the VKhUTEMAS and early Soviet Productivism) in which the technical procedures of various disciplines are brought into critical exchange and alignment. On this basis, the production of the art-object is subject—in the manner of the design studio, the architect’s office, or the industrial workshop—to the demands of functionality, research, and group discussion’.

²⁷Sophie Calle, *Take Care of Yourself* (Paris: Dis Voir/Actes Sud, 2008), 1.

²⁸Dave Beech, ‘Don’t Look Now!’ (Lecture, Loughborough University Business School, Loughborough, UK, January 29, 2009). www.arts.lboro.ac.uk/document.php?o=23 (accessed June 10, 2010).

²⁹Louise Neri, ‘Sophie Calle’, *Interview*, March 24, 2009 <http://www.interviewmagazine.com/art/sophie-calle> (accessed November 10, 2011).

³⁰*Ibid.*

³¹*Ibid.*

³²*Ibid.*

³³M. M. Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics* (London: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), 17.

³⁴*Ibid.*, 28.

³⁵*Ibid.*, 33.

³⁶*Ibid.*

³⁷Fyodor Dostoevsky, *Crime and Punishment* (London: Penguin, 2003), 48–49.

³⁸Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics*, 85.

³⁹*Ibid.*, 38.

⁴⁰Roberts, ‘Collaboration as a Problem of Art’s Cultural Form’, 561.

⁴¹*Ibid.*, 563.

⁴²Karl Marx, *The Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844* (New York: International Publishers, 1969.)

⁴³M. M. Bakhtin, *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays* (University of Texas Press 1986), 76–77.

⁴⁴Emile Durkheim, *The Division of Labour in Society* (London Collier Macmillan Publishers, 1964), 8.

⁴⁵James Miller, *History and Human Existence from Marx to Merleau-Ponty* (Oxford: University of London Press, 1982), 2.

⁴⁶Karl Marx, *The 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (Rockwell, Pennsylvania: Wildside Press LLC, 2008), 15. ‘Men make their own history, but they do not make it as they please; they do not make it under self-selected circumstances, but under circumstances existing already, given and transmitted from the past.’

⁴⁷For a discussion of the *othering* of complexity that occurs in social science research, see John Law, ‘Making a Mess with Method’, Heterogeneities.net, 19 January, 2006 <http://www.heterogeneities.net/publications/Law2006MakingaMesswithMethod.pdf> (accessed January 10, 2012).

⁴⁸Florian Schneider, ‘Collaboration: The Dark Site of the Multitude’, Theory Kit <http://kit.kein.org/node/1> (accessed September 10, 2011).

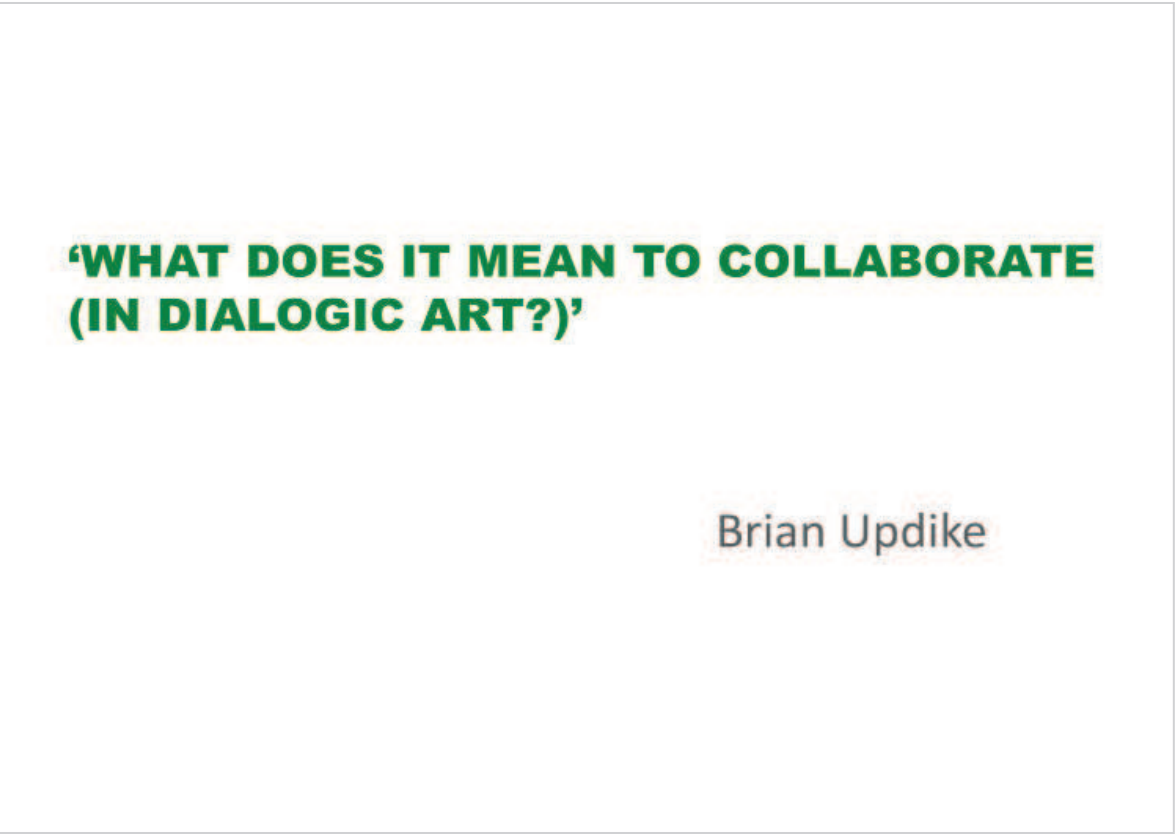


Fig. 5.0


Brian Updike: Thanks for insisting on that stretch, Krista. Now, shall we re-engage?

John Johnson: Okay, I’ll respond to that. I’d like Ella to address our problem statement by saying, simply, ‘Dialogic art is [fill in the blank].’

Ella Stone: *Bien sûr.* First, shall we all thank John for his very direct suggestion as to how we might get back on task? *Alors*, the first thing to say in response to John’s point is that the aim of my presentation has been to answer the question ‘What is dialogic art?’ with the question, ‘What does it mean to *collaborate* in dialogic art?’ And then, drawing on Roberts’s theory of collective collaboration to explore *Take Care of Yourself*, I have suggested that dialogic art might make *explicit* the *socially produced character* of its *authorship* in its *dialogic form*. So, to ‘fill in the blank’, dialogic art is about our ability and desire to represent the collaborative process—the sociality of the artwork’s becoming, if you will—in its *outcome*.

John Johnson: Okay, but if that’s your position, it doesn’t quite work in the case of *Take Care of Yourself*.

Ella Stone: I can see, John, that you’re *very* concerned about the degree to which this artwork makes its socially produced character *explicit*. Or what kind of character this *is*, or from *whose* perspective it’s represented? Or is it more an issue of editing—and elision? I’m thinking here of Phil’s point about Calle’s installation moving from the email to the responses without acknowledging what occurred in between.




Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai

now

No agreement in BC whether TCY respondents are collaborators or participants. #diacamp

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Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai

56m

AJ: The problems in TCY point to the challenges of a dialogic way of working. #diacamp

Expand Reply Delete Favorite




TheJargonBuster @TheJargonBuste1

9s

1/3 #diacamp Kester still favours 'viewer' in The One. We need a new word— 'encounterer' too awkward; 'interactant' too media arts;

Expand




TheJargonBuster @TheJargonBuste1

now

2/3 #diacamp cont'd... 'audience' too theatrical; 'reader' too literary; 'spectator' too occularcentric; 'actor' too filmic or sociological.

Expand Reply Delete Favorite




TheJargonBuster @TheJargonBuste1

6m

3/3 #diacamp Re quest for new word: What about 'interlocutor' for dialogic art? Too vague?

Expand Reply Delete Favorite




Marsha Bradfield @marshabradfield

now

#diacamp Re above: My dir. of stud., Neil Cummings, once suggested calling this subject 'Julia', which I like.

Expand Reply Delete Favorite




Marsha Bradfield @marshabradfield

now

#diacamp Alternate with 'Julian'? Avoid occularcentrism/emphasise individual subject. Would Julia/Julian catch on?

Expand Reply Delete Favorite



Ad Man Can @DavidRooksby

31s

#diacamp They may do but don't think those named Julia/lulian would mind. After all, there are many men named 'Art'

Expand Reply Delete Favorite

187

John Johnson: In a word, ‘yes’. I *do* think it’s problematic from the perspective of dialogic art on *your* definition that *Take Care of Yourself* omits what Clark described earlier as the artwork’s ‘other dialogues’, including Calle’s correspondence with the respondents, discussions regarding the installation’s design and so on and so forth. Don’t these dialogues *also* ‘build’ the artwork’s social character?

David Rooksby: Speaking of character--*characters*, actually, don’t forget the respondents’ job titles in *Take Care of Yourself*. Come on: are they collaborators or participants?

John Johnson: I don’t think we’ve come to any conclusion, beyond the rather tepid agreement that at least an expression of their authorship is made conspicuous in *Take Care of Yourself*.

Allison Jones: Well, in a way, these and other unresolved issues make this artwork all the more vital for our research on dialogic art—vital as a kind of *test case*. The problems in *Take Care of Yourself* point to the challenges of collaborative practice—challenges that I believe, based on what’s been said today, dialogic art aims to explore on a case-by-case basis.


Cassy Appadurai: So, would it be fair to say, Allison, that you’re suggesting *this* is what dialogic art aims to explore—what it means to *dialogue* or to *be in dialogue* in contemporary art when dialogue, itself, describes a kind of collaboration or collaborative relation?

Allison Jones: Well—

Brian Updike: Absolutely! Excuse me, Allison, I don’t mean to cut you off. But as this is my opportunity to present, let me respond to Cassy by saying that I think you’ve just created exactly the segue I was looking for! To begin with, I want to go back to something that Shadworth said. Recall that he described *Take Care of Yourself* as ‘a sociology of consciousness’, wherein—and do correct me if I’m wrong, Shadworth—but wherein ‘sociology’ described a coming-together of the respondents’ consciousnesses through a communion of their responses? Now it’s interesting to think of the *extent* of this coming-together. To cut to the chase, I want to note that *Take Care of Yourself* stops short of including the impressions—the responses—of those who encounter the installation on exhibition, if you follow. So there’s a limit there.

Now to take up *these* responses and consider the role they play in building contemporary art’s social character, I’ll look at the discursive production of relational practices through their commentary. So earlier, Ella mentioned that we’re curators and critics? What she didn’t say is that we’re also co-editors of a new magazine called *Assume the Position*. You can find out more about this by visiting <http://assumethepositionforart.tumblr.com>. If you visit this site, you’ll learn this publication explores writing *in, on, about, around* and, most importantly, *as* art. No doubt, my fascination with what has come to be called ‘art writing’ informs my take on the commentary of relational practice, yeah?


Yet my reason for responding to the question, ‘What is dialogic art?’ by commenting on this commentary, if you follow, is that I think we can do a better job of explaining what this type of art is by examining it through



Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai now

BU: DA = RP #diacamp


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Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai now

BU: Concerned with two relations— commentators of RP relation with art, and commentators' relations with each other. #diacamp

Expand Reply Delete Favorite



Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai now

BU refers to critique of NB's Relational Aesthetics (RA). #diacamp

Expand Reply Delete Favorite



Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai now

BU: RA and DA have much in common— both concerned with intersubjective exchange. #diacamp

Expand Reply Delete Favorite

the lens of relational practice—and its discursive production. And I'll say more about how I'm defining 'relational practice' in a moment. Suffice to say for now that, earlier, Ella mentioned that Claire Bishop puts what she calls 'dialogic art' in the relational-art category¹—though, it's more likely she means Kester's 'dialogical art', given her extensive critique of his commentary on dialogical art and aesthetics than 'dialogic art' as we're discussing it here. It's not yet, to the best of my knowledge, a well-recognised approach.

So in the next thirty or so minutes, I'll concentrate on two *particular* relations—relations that organise commentary on relational art. First, there is the commentators' relation to relational practices; second, there are the commentators' relations to each other through their commentary, if you follow.

Let me state the crux of my position very simply. The body of commentary that I will consider *forsakes* relational practice in some ways, whilst *expanding* the relations that make up this practice in others. In this expansion, we get a glimpse of an especially *compelling* instance of dialogic exchange, one that ultimately makes what is *immanent* to relational practice immanent to its *criticism*, too. Or at least that's my hypothesis!

Let me begin making my case by telescoping into the maelstrom of critique around critic and curator Nicolas Bourriaud's *Relational Aesthetics*. I guess *this* discussion was inevitable.

Clark Chris:

David Rooksby:

Clark Chris:

Brian Updike:

Because?

Ask Brian.

No doubt Clark is saying this because, as a theory of art in the 1990s, relational aesthetics, which brings together artists as wide-ranging as Liam Gillick and Sophie Calle, has been around for some time, and—

Clark Chris:

Brian Updike:

We've been *talking* about it for the last *decade*, at *least*! Two, actually. Two decades. And that discussion is ongoing. If anything, it's becoming more *vexed* as a result of the proliferation of dialogue-based practices that Allison said earlier were 'taking centre stage' in contemporary art.

Anne Lang:

Brian Updike:

'Vexed'? Absolutely. As a theory, relational aesthetics is, anything *but* straightforward. So is it any wonder that its legacy—what it means for contemporary art *today*—remains unsettled?

Allison Jones:

This is anecdotal, but it's been my observation that the more an art practice has in common with relational aesthetics—or at least how Bourriaud describes it—the more likely it is that the practice will actively *dissociate* from Bourriaud and his theory.

Anne Lang:

You know, I always think of *Relational Aesthetics* as a bit like a car crash. I mean, you really should look away from the mangled wreckage, but you just *can't*. All those suspect readings of critical theory and other texts and—²

Brian Updike:

Interesting reflections, Allison and Anne. And no doubt all the more so when it comes to dialogic art. Is there any question that it has much in common

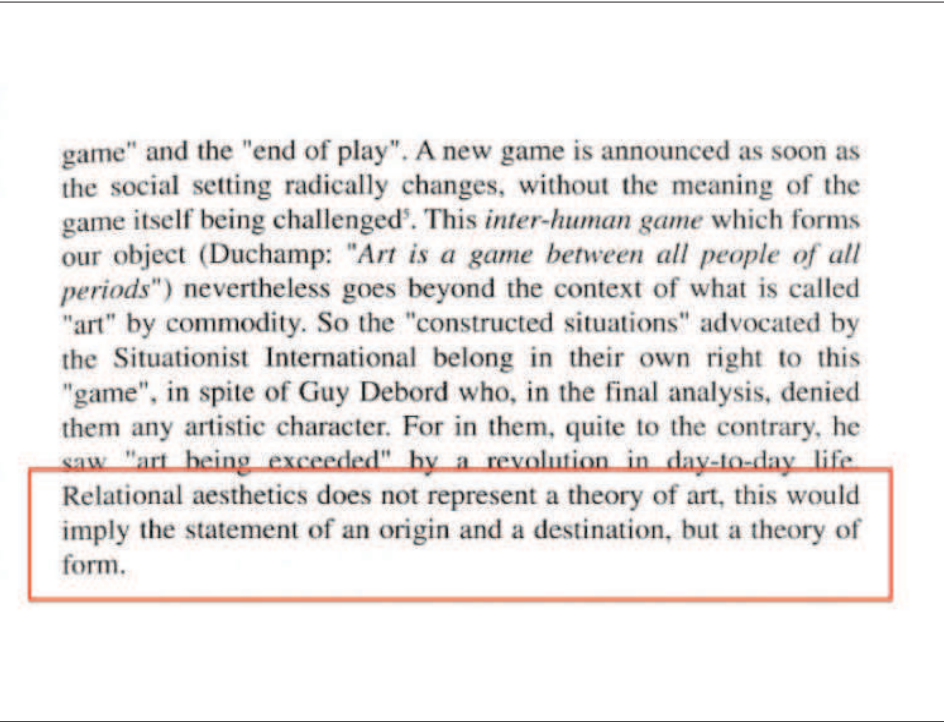


Fig. 5.1

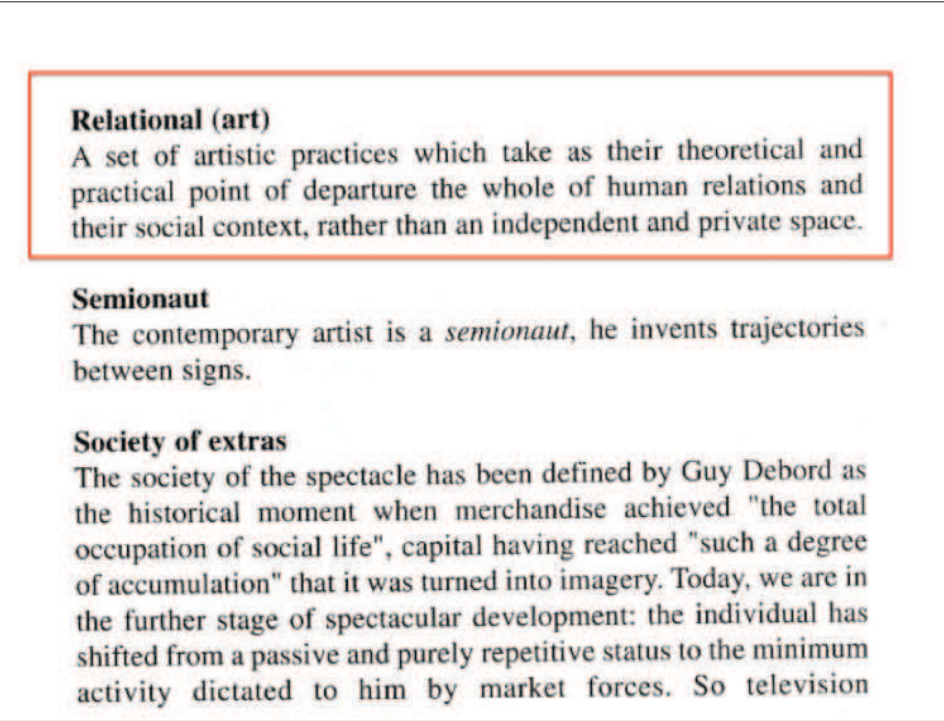
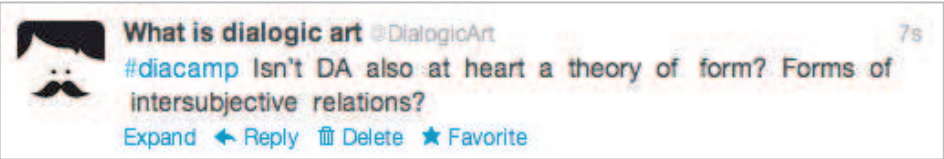


Fig. 5.2

with relational aesthetics? They're both, after all, explicitly concerned with intersubjective exchange. Wouldn't you agree that dialogic art shares with relational aesthetics an interest in redirecting our attention from objects to subjects—*human* subjects?³ Clark, let me, if you will, just ask if you can *really* imagine wrestling with the question, 'What is dialogic art?' *without* taking Bourriaud's theory into consideration?

Clark Chris: Oh yes—if so long as *I* may ask you what you're going to tell us about this that we don't already know.

David Rooksby: I'd be happy with someone telling me what we *do* already know. Like, what *is* relational aesthetics?

Brian Updike: Yeah, well, it's a theory of cultural production, David, a theory that takes its name from a collection of Bourriaud's essays. Some of these essays were published previously in exhibition catalogues, but most of them appeared in French in 1998 and in English four years later.⁴

Bourriaud posits early in his text—which no doubt we can all agree reads a bit like a manifesto—that 'relational aesthetics does not represent a theory of art, [as] this would imply the statement of an origin and a destination, but a theory of form'.⁵ (Fig. 5.1)

Marsha Bradfield: Brian, what do you think Bourriaud *means* by this?

Brian Updike: Let me suggest that, within the broader context of his thinking, he created this definition as a nod at the *belief* that it's the goal of relational aesthetics to experiment with open-ended forms that bring people into relation—social relations.

Clark Chris: But what's the basis for this?

Brian Updike: Well for me, Clark, the issue is slightly different, yeah? I mean, is it the *basis* of Bourriaud's belief that's in question? This is something Bishop leverages in her widely read critique. Bishop's issue is that forms of relational aesthetics are open-ended, resistant to closure, socially engaged—perpetual works-in-progress, if you follow—instead of closed objects.⁶ Bishop, in other words, finds the 'willfully unstable' identity of artworks that are generated through relational practices—challenging. The question for Bishop is then, 'How does one discern *what*, exactly, this type of art *is*?'⁷

Ella Stone: Or *where* it is! In the artwork, the practice, etcetera.

Brian Updike: So there is no doubt about the open-endedness of relational art. The question is, 'What consequences does this have for our engagement and experience of relational art and practice?'

Marsha spoke earlier about her interest in dialogic *forms*, which I took to mean forms relating to or being in the form of dialogue. Bourriaud, on the other hand, is concerned with what he calls *relational* forms.

David Rooksby: Because they relate to or are in the form of relations.

Anne Lang: But, you know, isn't that a tautology? I mean, to say 'Relational forms relate to or are in the form of relations?'

Brian Updike: Well, here's what Bourriaud offers as a definition in the glossary in his book, *Relational Aesthetics*: 'Relational (art)—A set of artistic practices which take

portrait of the heterogeneity of everyday life," and do not examine their relationship to it.³⁷ In other words, although the works claim to defer to their context, they do not question their imbrication within it. Gillick's pinboards are embraced as democratic in structure—but only those who own them may interact with their arrangement. We need to ask, as Group Material did in the 1980s, "Who is the public? How is a culture made, and who is it for?"

I am not suggesting that relational art works need to develop a greater social conscience—by making pinboard works about international terrorism, for example, or giving free curries to refugees. I am simply wondering how we decide what the "structure" of a relational art work comprises, and whether this is so detachable from the work's ostensible subject matter or permeable with its context. Bourriaud wants to equate aesthetic judgment with an ethicopolitical judgment of the relationships produced by a work of art. But how do we measure or compare these relationships? The *quality* of the relationships in "relational aesthetics" are never examined or called into question. When Bourriaud argues that "encounters are more important than the individuals who compose them," I sense that this question is (for him) unnecessary; all relations that permit "dialogue" are automatically assumed to be democratic and therefore good. But what does "democracy" really mean in this context? If relational art produces human relations, then the next logical question to ask is what *types* of relations are being produced, for whom, and why?

Fig. 5.3



Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai

now

What does it mean for RA to take 'human relations' as it's practical and theoretical point of departure? #diacamp

Expand Reply Delete Favorite



Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai

now

Back in 5 minutes. ; #diacamp

Expand Reply Delete Favorite

(how to find one's bearings in the cultural chaos and how to extract new modes of production from it)." Bourriaud, *Postproduction*, p 8.

The innovation of nineties art, for Bourriaud, is 'not any style, theme or iconography', but 'the fact of operating within... the sphere of inter-human relations'.⁵ 'Relational aesthetics' is a theory of the emphatically *social* constitution of contemporary art; of the extent to which art has become, more immediately and above all else, a matter of its social constitution. Bourriaud states this repeatedly. 'Art is the place that produces a specific sociability.'⁶ 'Art is a state of encounter.'⁷ 'The aura of contemporary art is a free association.'⁸ Art's 'sociability' is the principal 'object' or 'work' of so-called relational art; all art's 'objects' are subordinate to this social or relational dimension: 'what [the artist] produces, first and foremost, is relations between people and the world, by way of aesthetic objects'.⁹ To draw out what is decisive here we could modify Bourriaud's words and formulate a definition that he might be happy with: *the idea of relational aesthetics is that art is a form of social exchange*.

The widespread interest generated by *Relational Aesthetics* has doubt-

Fig. 5.4

as their theoretical and practical point of departure the whole of human relations and their social context, rather than an independent and private space'.⁸ (Fig. 5.2)

David Rooksby:

So you're talking about human relations?

Brian Uppike:

If you're finding this puzzling, David, let me say you're not alone. Bishop wonders, no doubt with more than a little exasperation, 'if relational art produces human relations, then the next logical question to ask is what *types* of relations are being produced, for whom and why?'⁹ (Fig. 5.3)

Allison Jones:

Well, Brian, that these questions remain unanswered by Bourriaud's theory explains why it's drawn such extensive critique!

Brian Uppike:

Absolutely! It's been extensive, no doubt about that; in fact, this critique is a veritable rite of passage for anyone wishing to be a commentator on relational practice. Let me offer, for your consideration, a brief catalogue beginning with philosopher of art Stewart Martin's Marxist reading. You'll notice that he exposes the tendency of Bourriaud's relational aesthetics to aestheticise capitalist exploitation.¹⁰ This critique begins with Martin indexing Bourriaud's preoccupation with the social composition of contemporary art:

Bourriaud states this repeatedly: 'Art is the place that produces a specific sociability.' 'Art is a state of encounter.' 'The aura of contemporary art is a free association.' Art's 'sociability' is the principle of the 'object' or the 'work' of so-called relational art; all art's 'objects' are subordinate to social or relational dimension: 'what [the artist] produces, first and foremost, is relations between people and the world, by way of aesthetic objects.'¹¹ (Fig 5.4)

Martin eventually formulates a definition of relational aesthetics that he thinks Bourriaud would be happy with, and from which his own critique springs, that definition being that 'the idea of relational aesthetics is that art is a form of social exchange'.¹² Do you follow?

John Johnson:

Okay, look, I *know* I've made this point before, but can you name a type of art that *doesn't* involve social exchange—or at least *some* kind of social encounter?

Brian Uppike:

Absolutely—or perhaps I should say absolutely *not*—and this goes to the heart of Martin's argument. As you've no doubt gathered, Bourriaud *insists* that relational art is preoccupied with social relations. But Martin is skeptical. Instead, he argues that this preoccupation is left *wanting* in relational art when it *uncritically* reproduces these relations. This occurs when, for instance, relational art fails to engage the *relational forms* that compose it in ways that question their *normative* significance as forms of capitalist exchange.¹³

Clark Chris:

Right—back to commodity fetishism.

Brian Uppike:

Do we need to go back to that discussion, or will you let me simply say, 'yes'? But going back to something else we discussed earlier, Martin would likely have a lot to say about *literal dialogue* as a referent for dialogic art.

Marsha Bradfield:

Well, don't keep us in suspense!

collaboration. The intellectually and aesthetically impoverished practices broadly (and somewhat slackly) known, thanks to Nicolas Bourriaud, as ‘relational aesthetics’,³ are a case in point: artists make forays into the outside world, ‘propose’ (as artworlders like to say) usually very contrived services to people who never asked for them, or rope them into some frivolous interaction, then expropriate as the material for their work whatever minimal labour they have managed to extract from these more or less unwitting participants (whom they sometimes have the gall to describe as ‘co-authors’). In so doing, they end up reproducing within the symbolic economy of art the sort of class-based relations of expropriation that Marx saw at work in the general economy: on the one hand, those who hold the symbolic capital (the artists), and on the other, those whose labour (such as it is) are used to foster the accumulation of more capital. And this is precisely what is usually passed off as ‘collaboration’ – making cynical mockery of the term – not just by such artists as Rirkrit Tiravanija, Maurizio Cattelan and all those whose names figure in all the almanacs of relational aesthetics, but by countless others besides.

Fig. 5.5

Brian Updike: Martin would no doubt wonder what, if any, consequences there would be for this type of art to engage in, or perform, social relations in the process of shifting from *literal* dialogue to *figurative* dialogue. To what extent would this shift normalise or critique the alienation of social relations within capitalist culture—yeah?¹⁴

Marsha Bradfield: Brian, could you give an example of what you mean by a relational artwork that might ‘normalise social relations within capitalist culture’?

Brian Updike: Briefly, because this is tangential to my focus on the commentary of relational practice, Martin calls out Vanessa Beecroft’s use of *people* in her artworks, which are living tableaux composed of models on display, often *en masse*. Martin wonders in what ways these artworks *question* capitalist exchange when in fact they are reproducing it through their own commodification of the models’ bodies, yeah? In what ways, Martin asks, are Beecroft’s living tableaux *more* than *literal* instances of the same kind of commodification we encounter in fashion magazines, for example? Martin is hard pressed to see how relational art, like Beecroft’s, *critically* engages with relational forms marked by capitalist exchange. And I absolutely agree. Not only does it rely on the very same relational forms for its social exchange as art, but it reproduces them without, well, question.¹⁵

Allison Jones: Brian, this approach to *critically* engaging forms of exchange could be a compelling point for our research. Could you indicate what this might mean for dialogic art?

Brian Updike: Yes, Allison. For starters, it means attending to the intersubjective exchange that constitutes this art through the fulcrum of the capitalist and other kinds of exchange that organise its authorial process, if you follow. So it’s about unpicking what is exchanged, by who and to what ends, yeah? Are you with me?

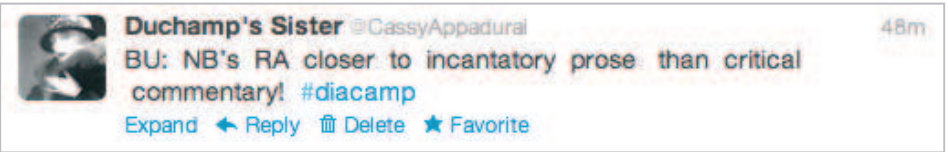
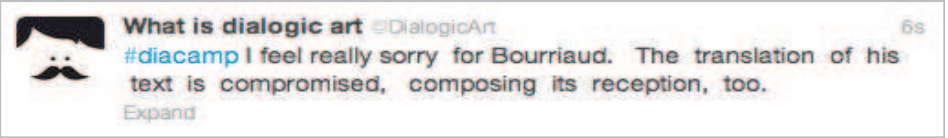
Marsha Bradfield: Say more?

Brian Updike: Well then, let me explain. This is something that critic and philosopher of art Stephen Wright considers in *his* critique of relational aesthetics. I’ll quote him at length, owing to his no-nonsense position. He takes aim at the authorial attribution and expropriation in relational art. And you know, this makes me think about our earlier discussion of the authorship of *Take Care of Yourself*, specifically with regard to what the respondents gain through their response. So according to Wright:

[In] The intellectually and aesthetically impoverished practices broadly (and somewhat slackly) known, thanks to Nicolas Bourriaud, as ‘relational aesthetics’,...artists make forays into the outside world, ‘propose’ (as artworlders like to say) usually very contrived services to people who never asked for them, or rope them into some frivolous interaction, then expropriate as the material for their work whatever minimal labour they have managed to extract from these more or less unwitting participants (whom they sometimes have the gall to describe as ‘co-authors’). In so doing, they end up reproducing within the symbolic economy of art the sort of class-based relations of expropriation that Marx saw at work in the

reflection on their socially transitive potential. This, for Bourriaud, is a political activity in so far as relational art practices not only focus on the 'sphere of inter-human relations', a realm that is an endemically political sphere to begin with, but also give rise to the conditions within which unprecedented inter-human relations can be articulated. I will return to this latter point; however, for now it should be noted that relational art is not so much about artists taking up political causes per se – an act that can be seen merely to co-opt the political mileage to be had in a subject and rehearse it via art practice – as it is a vision of art reflecting and *producing* inter-subjective relations and imbricating those relations within a sociopolitical rather than, strictly speaking, an art-related forum. From this perspective, any examination of the politics of relational aesthetics is engaged not so much in an examination of political content as it is with the politics of social formations.

Fig. 5.6



general economy: on the one hand, those who hold the symbolic capital (the artists), and on the other, those whose labour (such as it is) are used to foster the accumulation of more capital. And this is precisely what is usually passed off as 'collaboration'—making cynical mockery of the term—not just by such artists as Rirkrit Tiravanija, Maurizio Cattelan and all those whose names figure in all the almanacs of relational aesthetics, but by countless others besides.¹⁶ (Fig. 5.5)

Brilliant, yeah? But, as sympathetic as I am to Wright's argument, I would counter that relational artworks like *Take Care of Yourself* gesture towards the *potential* of this practice to offer *more* than a 'usually contrived service'. I can see how Calle's project has benefit in ways that outstrip the symbolic significance of the responses that make up this artwork as 'Art'. And I'm thinking here about the respondents' personal lives, how participating in the project might help them make sense of their love life. And I agree the email is a pretext for engaging with their *subjectivation*—the production of their subjectivity through these relations. In a sense, and somewhat curiously, *this* gestures towards an overarching argument in Wright's research. He calls for the 'non-visibility' of art—for putting art to work beyond the art world as a semi-autonomous sphere. It's a kind of double movement: displaced from the symbolic and other economies organising the worlds of art, art and art practice can deploy their skills in the service of real-world problems¹⁷—including romantic ones. Do you follow?

David Rooksby:

Well art *should* be put to work beyond the art world—and in the service of broader concerns.

Brian Updike:

Well interestingly enough, this is very close to the way curator Anthony Downey understands relational aesthetics. As part of his broader concern with the politics of aesthetics in contemporary art in general and relational art in particular, Downey summarises Bourriaud's theory like this: '[It] is a vision of art reflecting and *producing* inter-subjective relations and imbricating those relations within a sociopolitical rather than, strictly speaking, an art-related forum'.¹⁸ (Fig 5.6)

Now keeping that in mind, I think it's fascinating that when it comes to *Bourriaud* on Bourriaud's role in imbricating relational art in the broader context of contemporary art and beyond, he describes his own responsibility like this: 'The critic's primary task, is to recreate the complex set of problems that arise in a particular period or age, and to take a closer look at the answers given'.¹⁹ But in noting this, he's really just observing the obvious—that criticism today engages art practice within a broader socio-cultural-political context—yeah? And in the case of Bourriaud's own commentary of relational practice, the focus is somewhat different. *Relational Aesthetics* tends to focus more on the theoretical context of this type of art than on the *art practices* that are brought together by this categorisation.

Anne Lang:

You know, I agree that Bourriaud's theory is, well question-begging, and his plagiarism in *Relational Aesthetics* is nothing short of shocking! Shadworth

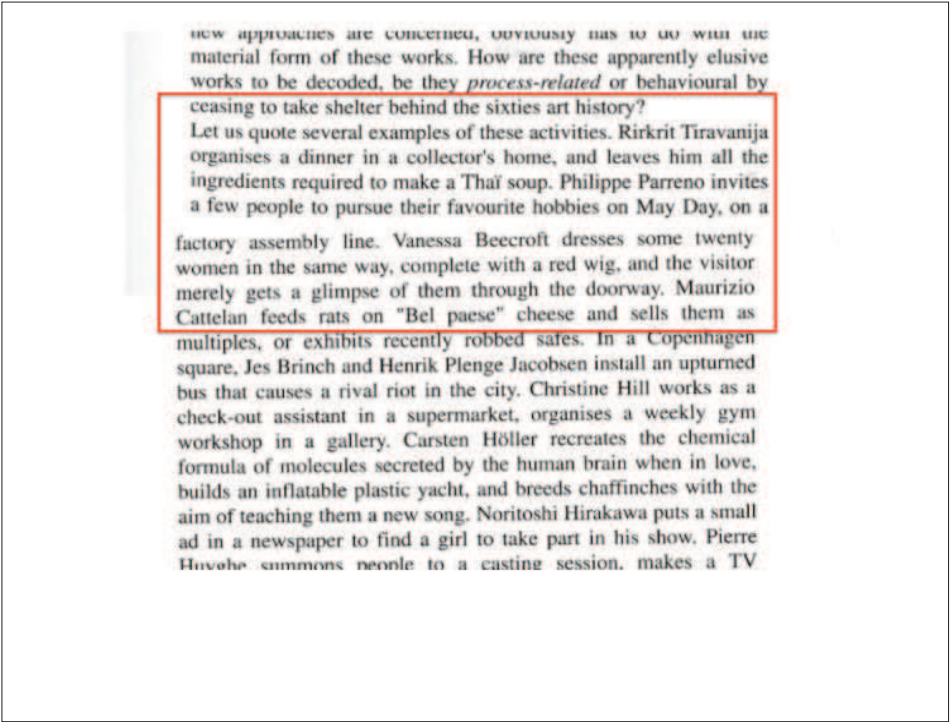


Fig. 5.7



Fig. 5.8

will be interested, in that it appears Bourriaud often refers to Bakhtin's thinking without citation.²⁰ But, I mean, the meaning of Bourriaud's text is also compromised by its appalling translation, which really plays a role in authoring *Relational Aesthetics*.²¹

Maeve Cutty:

It sounds as though Bourriaud has been a target of sorts, at least in the world of art. I haven't read his text, so I don't have a position. But I would like to press the point that, regardless of its substance or lack thereof in *Relational Aesthetics*, this text has many authors. As Anne was saying, there are also authorial considerations related to the text's publication, its translation among them. And, of course, the other commentators' critiques also have a bearing on how we read Bourriaud's text.

Brian Updike:

Absolutely. You're dead right about that, Maeve! But regardless of who or what authored *Relational Aesthetics*, this text is, bar none, the most acute instance of commentary to my knowledge that purports to be art criticism and/or art theory while *actually* operating as something closer to *incantatory prose*. It foregoes rigorous analysis of relational art, yet it tries to conjure up the various effects of this type of art via performative speech, if you follow. Here's a rather understated example. When Bourriaud references relational artworks, they tend to take the form of what he calls 'quotes'.²² Here is one of his so-called quotes:

Rirkrit Tiravanija organises a dinner in a collector's home, and leaves him all the ingredients required to make a Thai soup. [sic] Philippe Parreno invites a few people to pursue their favorite hobbies on May Day, in a factory assembly line. Vanessa Beecroft dresses some twenty women in the same way, complete with a red wig, and the visitor merely gets a glimpse of them through the doorway.²³ (Fig. 5.7)

Just let me say that brief and descriptive 'quotes' like this one make relational art *even more* 'non-available', to use Bourriaud's own parlance.²⁴ You know, a lot of this practice is spatiotemporally specific. We're talking event-like projects, yeah? Not stationary or so-called 'discrete objects'. I reckon this makes it all the more important to carefully describe relational artworks. But Bourriaud's quotes actually *obscure* them by being so partial and impressionistic. And doesn't this make it all the more frustrating, as the vast majority of us only have access to these practices *through* their re-presentation in commentary? I'm repeating myself now, but doesn't this, then, make the depth and accuracy of this commentary all the more *important*? Do you follow? This is a very important point.

So then, adding insult to injury, the lack of illustrations in *Relational Aesthetics*—photographs, drawings, diagrams or *any* other form of non-verbal reference—intensifies the conspicuous *absence* of relational practices in the book. Actually, I'll correct myself—there is one image. (Fig. 5.8) The 2002 English edition features a woman on the cover reading to herself inside Tiravanija's *Untitled (One Revolution per Minute)*, which was presented at Le

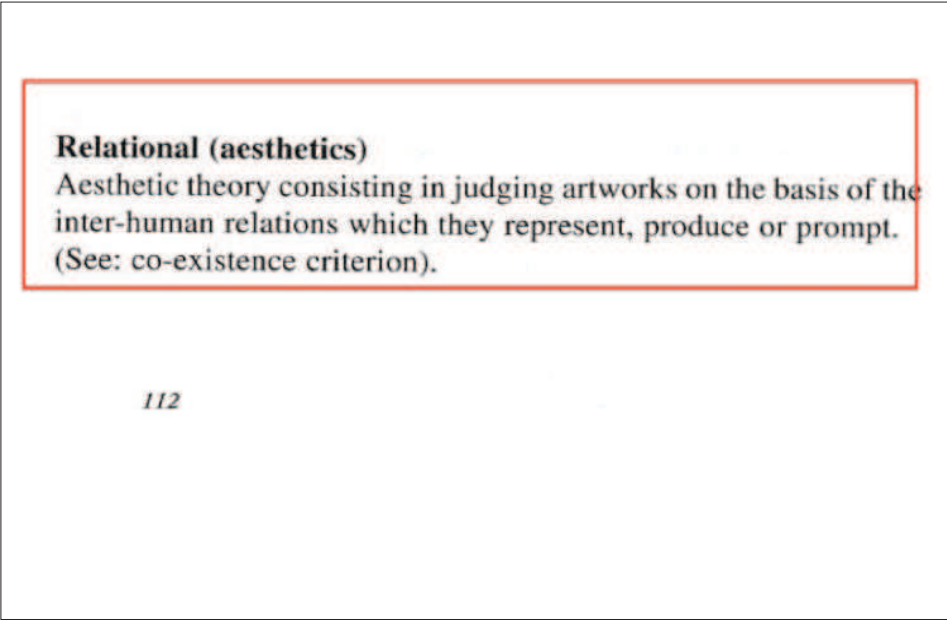


Fig.5.9

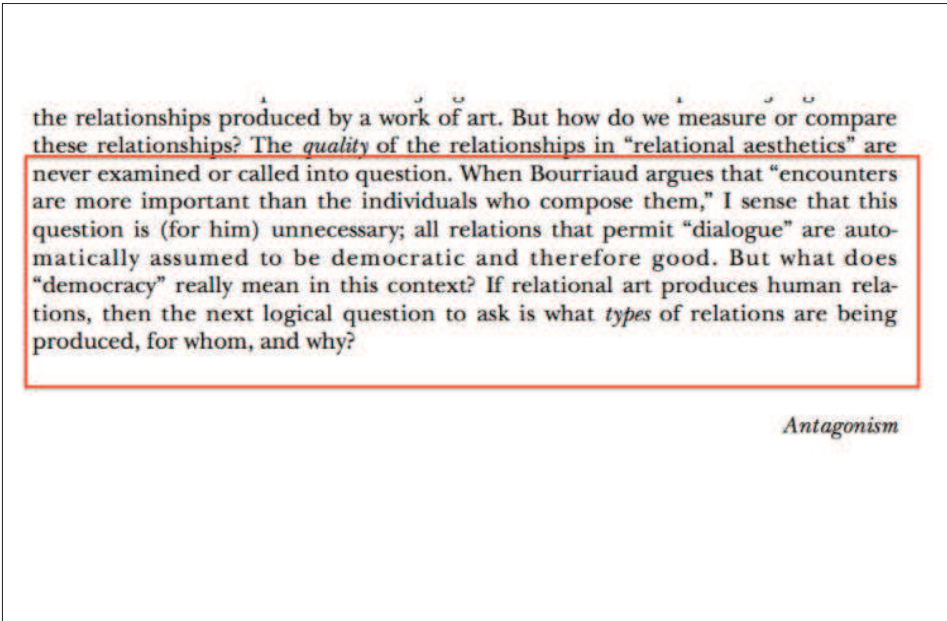


Fig. 5.10

David Rooksby:

Brian Updike:

Maeve Cutty:

Brian Updike:

Maeve Cutty:

Brian Updike:

Maeve Cutty:

Brian Updike:

Consortium, Dijon in 1996.²⁵ The irony is palpable, as it shows the artwork being experienced through an individualised act of reading.

‘The irony.’ Come on, Brian. Tell me what I’m missing.

The cover image is an ironic choice, David, because it seems to contradict Bourriaud’s argument throughout *Relational Aesthetics* that what distinguishes this theory of form is its emphasis on art as intersubjective exchange—

But—

Sorry, Maeve, I’ll come back to you momentarily. First, let me ask you all to recall Bourriaud’s definition of ‘relational art’. He defines it as an artistic practice that takes as its theoretical and practical point of departure the *whole of human relations and their social context*. This is in contrast with other practices that rely on independent and private space for their absorption and interpretation, yeah?²⁶ This much should be clear by now, this distinction. And, in case there is any doubt that this view is central to Bourriaud’s theory, elsewhere in *Relational Aesthetics* he makes the rather spectacular claim that, ‘Aesthetic theory consists of judging artworks on the basis of inter-human relations which they represent, produce and prompt.’²⁷ (Fig. 5.9) So—

May I interject *now*, Brian? Thanks, luv. Right, so going back to the book cover, do your remarks mean that in your opinion, reading *can’t* be a form of intersubjective exchange? Because I’m not so sure about that.

No doubt, it can be—but *not* on Bourriaud’s account of relational practice, owing to his emphasis on face-to-face interaction, which could perhaps be the most salient feature of relational form in his view.²⁸

Oh!

‘Oh!’ is right. Can you see the rub? Now as many of you are no doubt aware, when it comes to Bishop’s critique of *Relational Aesthetics*, it’s the failure of this interaction to prompt more than convivial exchange that proves especially problematic. Bishop writes, ‘When Bourriaud argues that “encounters are more important than the individuals that compose them”, I sense that . . . [for him] all relations that permit “dialogue” are automatically assumed to be democratic and therefore good. But what does democracy really mean in this context?’²⁹ (Fig. 5.10) For those of you who are familiar with Bishop’s commentary on relational practices in general, you’ll know that, in her opinion, there is only *one* answer to this question: agonism arising from antagonism is an antidote for the lack of criticality that she believes pervades relational art, yeah?

For those of you unfamiliar with this discourse, let me say, very briefly, that Bishop pins her colours to Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe’s theory of agonism, which they develop from Antonio Gramsci’s concept of hegemony. This turns on the idea that healthy democracy [and I see Shadworth has tweeted a connection with ‘heteroglossia’ as a clash of voices] is sustained by ongoing political struggle.³⁰ So for Bishop, *good* democracy [and I think this

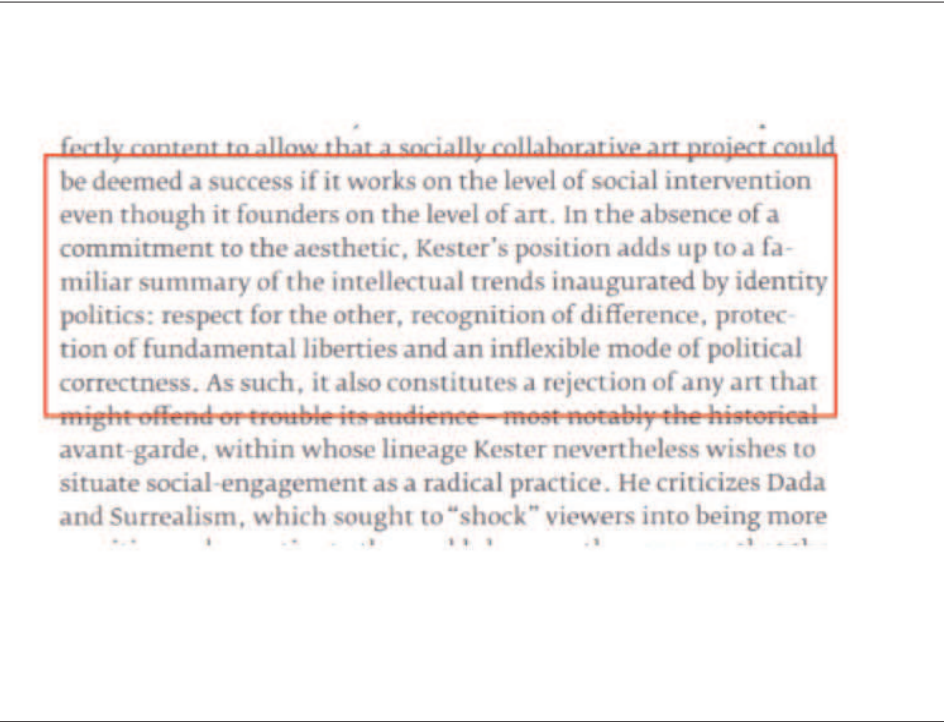


Fig. 5.11

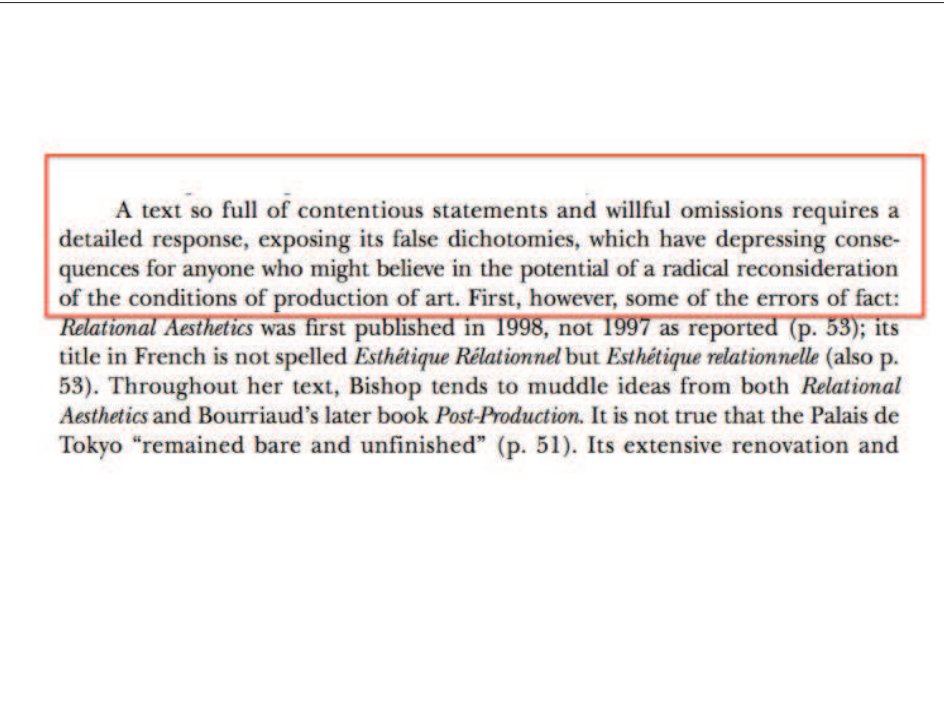
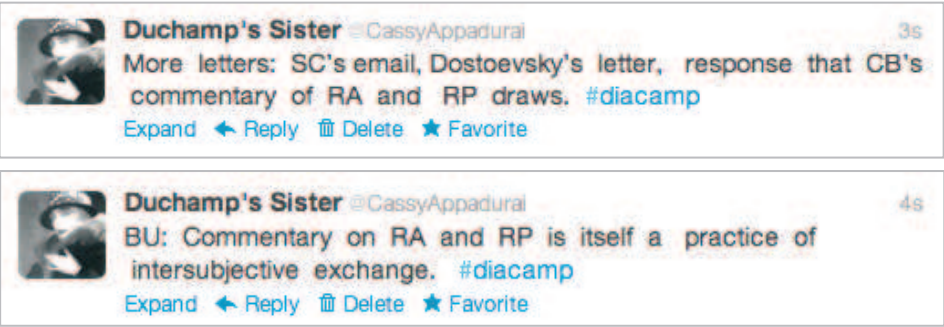


Fig. 5.12

applies to ‘dialogue’, too—‘good dialogue’] is marked by ‘conflict, division, and instability’ on the grounds that, rather than ‘ruin the public sphere, they are conditions of its existence’.³¹

So let me just say that, in my opinion, Bishop’s preoccupation with agonism has two profound consequences for her commentary on relational art, which then have an impact on the commentary of relational art, in general—yeah? First, this preoccupation prompts her demand for more overt agonism in relational practice. She critiques, for example, Tiravanija’s practice of cooking and serving curry dinners on the grounds that it promotes an harmonious common experience.³² She challenges Liam Gillick for similar reasons, namely that his work argues for compromise and negotiation, which then render his installations non-contentious.³³

Allison Jones:

And of course Bishop is critical of Kester’s dialogical art and dialogical aesthetics for the same reason. Well isn’t she?

Brian Updike:

Well, in Kester’s case—or in the case of his commentary on relational practice, at least—Bishop takes issue with what she describes as evidence of an ‘ethical turn’. So when Kester promotes practices, such as those by the Austrian art-activist group WochenKlausur, and projects of theirs like *Intervention to Aid Drug-Addicted Women*, Bishop actually castigates Kester for confusing social work with art. She says, ‘Kester’s position adds up to a familiar summary of the intellectual trends inaugurated by identity politics: respect for the other, recognition of difference, protection of fundamental liberties, and an inflexible mode of political correctness’.³⁴ (Fig. 5.11) This, then, brings me to the core of my position on this vein of commentary on relational practice—that, when it comes to Bishop’s particular sense of what constitutes ‘good’ dialogue, it has important relevance for commentary on relational art in a second way. Can you see where I’m going with this? Drumroll, please! Not only does Bishop call for greater agonism *in* relational practice but, to her credit, she also *practices* this in her own commentary by *being* antagonistic towards other commentators, especially Bourriaud and Kester.

Anne Lang:

So you mean that Bishop’s commentary embodies the agonism that she, you know, calls for in relational art?

Brian Updike:


Absolutely. And, in doing so, she makes what she thinks should be immanent to the practice of this type of art immanent to its commentary, catalysed in good part by her own antagonistic stance—yeah?

No doubt one of the most *obvious* places where this antagonism has played out is on the pages of *October*,^{35*} where Bishop critiqued Bourriaud in a full-length essay called, ‘Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics’. This drew a critical letter of response from Gillick, whose art practice figures prominently in both *Relational Aesthetics* and Bishop’s critique. Bishop responded to Gillick’s response and, subsequently, Kester voiced a rejoinder with a scathing letter of his own to Bishop, which was then published in *Art Forum* in 2006, and to which Bishop responded in kind.³⁶


Claire Bishop Responds:

When Liam Gillick told me he wished to write a reply to my essay, I encouraged him on the assumption that it would give further intellectual focus to the debate about relational art. It's a pity that he has used this opportunity to respond rhetorically rather than theoretically. While there are important factual corrections in his response, for which I am grateful, they do not address the theoretical basis of my argument.


Fig. 5.13




Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai · 3s
By being agonistic, CB makes what's immanent to commentary on RA and RP immanent to its commentary. #diacamp
[Expand](#)




Allison Allie Jones @AllisonAllieJon · now
#diacamp Need to be careful with point about agonism being immanent to RA; this is CB's desire as much as anything.
[Expand](#) [Reply](#) [Delete](#) [Favorite](#)



TheJargonBuster @TheJargonBuste1 · 28s
#diacamp Relation between 'agonism' and 'antagonism' not entirely clear in BU's discussion.
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Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai · 8s
The way that commentary performs art influences our perceptions. #diacamp
[Expand](#) [Reply](#) [Delete](#) [Favorite](#)



What is dialogic art @DialogicArt · now
#diacamp But the commentry is not the art, is it?!
[Expand](#) [Reply](#) [Delete](#) [Favorite](#)

Anne Lang: So, *more* letters—first Calle’s email, then the letter in *Crime and Punishment* and now these. I mean, maybe, this makes correspondence the *optimum* format for dialogic art as an instance of relational art, you know?

Brian Updike: Your observation, Anne, brilliantly highlights the significance of commentary on relational art as *itself* a practice of intersubjective exchange, one that comes together as an agonistic union of consciousnesses—voices that sound in relation to each other in the discourse of contemporary art, yeah? And to give you a sense of the agonism prompted by Bishop’s commentary, let me offer for your consideration an excerpt from Gillick’s letter. He writes:

A text so full of contentious statements and willful omissions requires a detailed response, exploring its false dichotomies, which have depressing consequences for anyone who might believe in the potential for radical reconsideration.³⁷ (Fig. 5.12)

Then, *countering* Gillick’s *counter*, Bishop writes that ‘It is a pity that he used this opportunity to respond rhetorically rather than theoretically’.³⁸ (Fig. 5.13) So, is Bishop correct in her assessment of Gillick’s response? That’s open to debate. But let me ask another question: is her overall point *valid*? In my opinion, yeah. The *rhetoric* of commentary on relational practice—so, the way this type of art is performed *through* its commentary—has important consequences for how it’s received. Do you follow? The discursive exchange, like the deeply personal type between commentators of relational art, *mediates* our understanding of the practice of this type of art to the extent that I don’t think we can easily separate the commentators’ highly charged perspectives from the practice itself—or at least from representations of the practice. Added to this, there is the issue of what might be described as ‘non-commentary’ on relational practice exemplified by Bourriaud’s *Relational Aesthetics*. I will say that Bishop and Kester are both more thorough in their descriptions. But even *then*, their representations—or should I say *re-*presentations, for emphasis—are necessarily partial. This is not only because *re-*presentations are always more and less than what they *re-*present. Nor is this reducible to the spatiotemporal nature of many relational artworks. And here I’m thinking about the non-availability of these artworks, which no doubt makes their re-presentation even more challenging. It’s also because the commentary foregoes any aspirations of objectivity by being explicitly subject to the perspectives and agendas of its commentators—which, in Bishop’s case, involves antagonising her peers!

So if you’ll let me now return to Clark’s provocative question—that is, what have I told you about relational art that you may not have known before—I would say I have suggested that there is a vein of commentary on this cultural production that, in some ways, *forsakes* relational practices. This occurs when, for example, instead of substantive engagement with this *art and practice*, the commentators engage *each other* in a struggle over the significance of a relational approach. And it is in *this engagement* that I think



A typical critique, increasingly made, of Nicolas Bourriaud’s relational aesthetics is that it substitutes a general model of “conviviality” for any criticality, or, more specifically, forms of dissent. My take on this (following Jean-Francois Lyotard) is that such dissent – which critiques of relational aesthetics take as the very *modus operandi* of a radical contemporary art practice - can be caught by the very thing they dissent from. They are forced to operate on the same terrain as their “enemy” and, as such, these forms of dissent can merely reproduce more of the same albeit dressed up as opposition.

A different take on Bourriaud might be to accelerate his concepts. For example, to articulate, following Spinoza, a kind of *super-conviviality* that is

Fig. 5.14

we see clear evidence of the kind of literal intersubjective exchange that appears to be increasingly key to *dialogic* art . Do you follow?

Moreover—and if you can hold your comment, John, just momentarily—the significance of relational art is not constituted *solely* or even *primarily* in the intersubjective exchange among the relational forms through which it is most apparently organised. The intersubjective exchange that composes its discursive production and dissemination *also* has authorial significance—and it has this significance because it makes the authorship of relational art and practice ‘highly distributed’, to borrow KK’s turn of phrase.

John Johnson: Okay, but look—*isn’t this true for all art?* My point is, isn’t authorship *always* highly distributed?

Brian Uppike: No doubt. But doesn’t this make it all the more important for relational art in general and dialogic art in particular? Doesn’t this make it crucial to draw this to our attention by making this revelation one of its *central* concerns?

KK Lin: I think, if I may interject, John and Brian, well—does this go back to Clark’s discussion of ‘the dialogic’? I mean, his view that dialogic art is rife with forces and counter forces? That it’s actually authored by a wide range of dialogues, and that those dialogues don’t always find unequivocal expression in the artwork as an outcome of its authorial process? Does that make sense?

Clark Chris: Well, I’m not quite sure / expressed the last bit, but I certainly agree.

Brian Uppike: Well yes—or at least, I’ve tried to frame commentary on relational art as a battlefield where contests are fought among commentators over the significance of this art by way of their re-readings of each other’s readings and re-readings—yeah?

Marsha Bradfield: So is this an instance of *infinite regress?* Or *infinite progress?* Or—?

KK Lin: Self-reference?

Brian Uppike: No doubt. These are all questions I’ll keep in mind as I research how it is that this commentary is expanding the field of relational practice—how it is that it comes together as agonistic dialogue, yeah? And how, in doing so, it makes what is *immanent* to relational art also *immanent* to commentary on this art.

Marsha Bradfield: So ‘form follows function’—or maybe ‘form is function’?

Brian Uppike: Maybe it’s more the case that ‘form follows function as *content*’. To my mind, the criticality of the commentary stems from the agonistic dialogue among commentators as they critique each other’s points of view. This is often the *substantive* content, not *discussion* of the art, *per se*.

John Johnson: Okay maybe. But to play devil’s advocate—don’t we understand relational art *through* its commentary?

Brian Uppike: Well, in the case of *this* commentary, I think what we might understand is the ethos of this practice more generally in contrast with the significance of specific artworks—if you follow. To say it again, what is for me so interesting about this is that *it makes what is immanent to relational art also immanent to commentary on this art*.

Alright, listen, I know this has been a lot to process. But let me leave you with one final point. It concerns Bishop’s conviction that ‘good’ democracy is



Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai now

What's the relationship between DA and it's commentary? #diacamp

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What is dialogic art @DialogicArt now

1/2 #diacamp Could be really interesting if art was explicitly in dialogue with its commentary .


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What is dialogic art @DialogicArt 7s

2/2 #diacamp (cont'd.) ... if it actively responded in the same way the commentators do to each other through their letters, etc.


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Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai 11s

BU:'Meta-dialogue' could provide a dialogic form for DA's dialogic commentary (?)#diacamp

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Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai now

BC to take a short break. Be right back (BRB).

Expand Reply Delete Favorite

distinguished by agonism. Obviously, agonism is preferable to totalitarianism. Yet, when it comes to contemporary art practice, it’s rarely a case of either/ or. I think artist and critic Simon O’Sullivan is absolutely right when he writes, and I’ll conclude with this quote:

My take on this (following Jean-Francois Lyotard) is that such dissent—which critiques of relational aesthetics takes as the very *modus operandi* of radical contemporary art practice—can be caught by the very thing they dissent from. They are forced to operate on the same terrain as their ‘enemy’ and, as such, these forms of dissent can merely reproduce more of the same albeit dressed up as opposition.³⁹ (Fig. 5.14)

Thank you all very much.

- Cassy Appadurai:

Thank *you*, Brian. A point of clarification: you’re quoting O’Sullivan to make the point that, when it comes to commentary on relational art, dissent for its own sake is commensurate with conviviality for *its* own sake?
- Brian Updike:

Dead right, Cassy. Brilliant. But what do you think about the idea that the vein of commentary on relational practice, as I’ve described it, has developed in such a way that it makes what is immanent in this type of art also immanent in its commentary?
- Clark Chris:

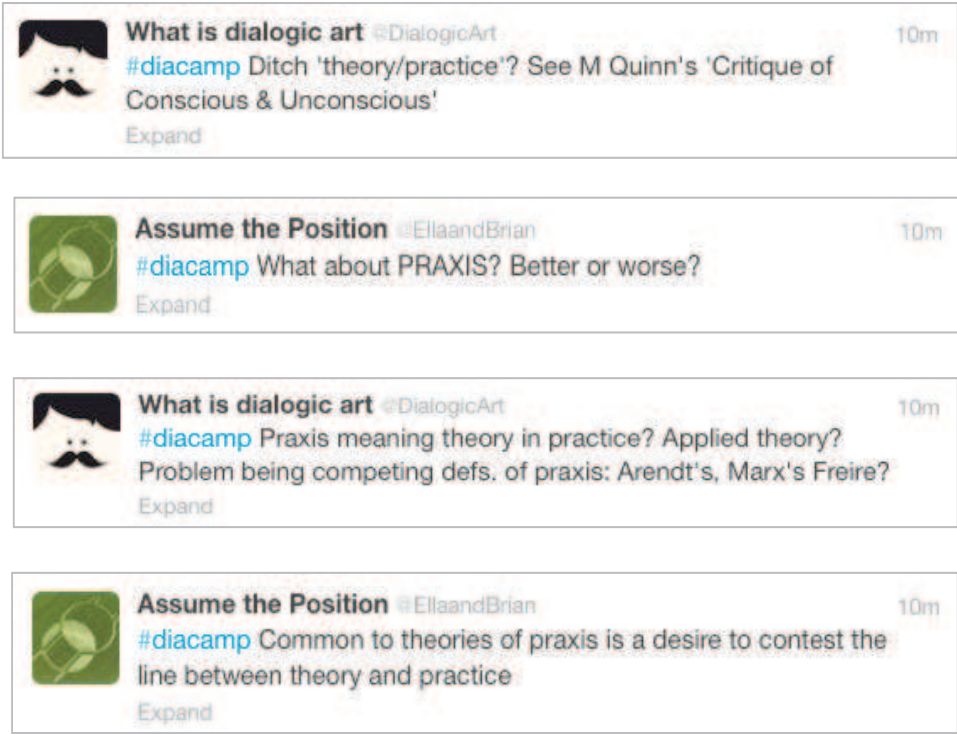
But the commentary is *not* the art!
- David Rooksby:

Enough already, please!
- Brian Updike:

No, this is important, David. Isn’t the commentary tantamount to the art? If there are more people who encounter relational practice through reading *Relational Aesthetics* and Bishop’s critique of it than through the relational art practices directly, is this not *their* experience of relational art?
- Allison Jones:

If nothing else, this shores up the importance of Marsha’s and my research rationale that, as interlocutors in the production of dialogic artworks, and by researching them through practice, we might produce commentary that differently disseminates the complexity of this art’s authorial process. And in light of your contribution, Brian, this might entail an approach that prioritises specific instances of dialogic art and practice on the one hand, while on the other hand it explores the ethos of this art as irreducible to any one characteristic, in contrast to Bishop’s preoccupation with agonism.
- Brian Updike:

Absolutely. That sounds like a promising direction for your research, Allison. And creating a critical context where different kinds of commentary—a wider range—might find voice is one of the reasons why Ella and I founded our magazine, *Assume the Position* as a space for writing *in, on, about, around* and *as* art. But I’m really interested in the most recent tweet by ‘What is dialogic art? ‘Could be really interesting if art were in overt dialogue with its commentary—if it actively responded in the same way the commentators do to each other in relational art and practice through their letters, etc’. Well absolutely, and wouldn’t this also be an interesting direction for your future research, Allison and Marsha?



Cassy Appadurai: Before recommending directions for their research, Brian, how would you, in light of what we’ve discussed so far, complete the problem-statement, ‘Dialogic art is [fill in the blank]’?

Brian Urdike: I would agree that dialogic art is a relational practice especially concerned with dialogue as intersubjective exchange, yeah? Added to this, dialogic art recognises that intersubjective dialogues, in addition to those *composing* the artworks—including its commentary—also *author* it. And I would recommend that dialogic art explore this through its cultural production by, for example, developing ways of *self-representing* in the art worlds that will ensure that what is central to the practice of dialogic art practice is also central to its commentary. Or at least, at the very least, investigate the relation between the dialogues composing the artworks proper, if you know what I mean, and those dialogues surrounding the artworks and expanding the dialogues therein.

Allison Jones: Well earlier, we spoke about meta-dialogue, and I think this is a good place to begin. How might dialogic art generate dialogue *about itself* and, in doing so, offer to make what is immanent to this type of art also immanent to its commentary? No doubt, we should let this be a rhetorical question for now, something for us to explore further.

Marsha Bradfield: Thank you, Brian. I think I agree, I think so. I mean, if dialogic art foregrounds dialogue as intersubjective exchange, then why not embrace commentary—generated by the author-artists of this practice and others beyond—as constitutive of the theory and practice of its authorship?

David Rooksby: Marsha, can we have a comfort break?

Allison Jones: Well, there are still *three* contributions to get through before lunch.

David Rooksby: Five minutes! We’ve been at it for *four* hours.

Marsha Bradfield: Of course, David. The time now is 1:07. Could everyone be back here at 1:20? Please help yourself to tea and coffee, which I should say was generously provided by our institution, Chelsea College of Art and Design. The facilities are down the hall. Allison, could you pause the recorder, please? Thank you.

¹Claire Bishop, ‘The Social Turn: Collaboration and its Discontents’, in *Right about Now: Art and Theory since the 1990s*, eds. Margriet Schavemaker and Mischa Rakier (Amsterdam: Valiz, 2007), 60. Bishop includes the following in the category of ‘relational practices’: socially engaged art, community-based art, experimental communities, dialogic art, littoral art, participatory, interventionist, research-based or collaborative art.

²Claire Bishop, ‘Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics’, *October* 110 (Fall 2004): 62. Bishop takes up Bourriaud’s sometimes curious interpretations of critical theory when, for instance, she notes his misreading of Umberto Eco’s sense of ‘the open work’: ‘However, it is Eco’s contention that every work of art is potentially “open,” since it may produce an unlimited range of possible readings; it is simply the achievement of contemporary art, music and literature to have foregrounded this fact. Bourriaud misinterprets these arguments by applying them to a specific type of work (those that require literal interaction) and thereby redirects the argument back to artistic intentionality rather than issues of reception’. Bishop goes on to argue that a second way that Bourriaud’s sense of an open work differs from Eco’s relates to Eco’s view that works of art ‘are *reflections* of the conditions of our existence in a fragmented modern culture, while Bourriaud sees the work of art *producing* these conditions’. Whether Bishop is correct in her assessment of Eco’s approach to the open work, her overall point is valid:

Bourriaud’s readings are more speculative and creative than analytical or expository.

³Stewart Martin, ‘Critique of Relational Aesthetics’, *Third Text* 21 (4, 2007): 383. Drawing on Michael Fried’s critique of Minimalism in his important essay, ‘Art and Objecthood’, Martin argues that relational aesthetics is a theory of art’s theatricality. On Martin’s view, Bourriaud holds fast to the intersubjective interstice produced through relational art incorporating the beholder, while also marginalizing the art object in ways that outstrip Minimalism’s preoccupation with the object. But for all its virtues of post-Minimalist critique of commodity fetishism, argues Martin, relational art remains vulnerable to easy and ironic inversion. Contra Claire Bishop’s critique that relational aesthetics prompts little more than intersubjective conviviality, Martin argues that it inadvertently reproduces the instrumental commodification of social exchange as capitalist exchange.

⁴Nicolas Bourriaud, *Postproduction Culture as Screenplay: How Art Reprograms the World* (New York: Has and Sternberg, 2002). Although Bourriaud is perhaps best known *for Relational Aesthetics*, his publications on relational art practice extend to other texts, most notably for our immediate discussion, *Postproduction Culture as Screenplay*, where he explores the ways in which relational forms are drawn from popular culture, appropriated, remixed and mashed up to produce contemporary art.

⁵Nicolas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics* (Dijon, FR: les presses du réel, 2002), 19.

⁶Bishop, ‘Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics’, 52.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*, 113.

⁹Bishop, ‘Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics’, 65.

¹⁰Martin, ‘Critique of Relational Aesthetics’, 371.

¹¹Ibid., 370.

¹²Ibid.

¹³Ibid., 371.

¹⁴Ibid., 385.

¹⁵Ibid., 379–380.

¹⁶Stephen Wright, ‘The Delicate Essence of Creative Collaboration’, *Third Text* 18 (6, 2004), 534–535.

¹⁷Ibid., 535. Wright writes, ‘What would be more unusual and far more interesting [than mainstream art practices that depend on the symbolic economy of art] is when artists do not do art. Or, at any rate, when they do not claim that whatever it is they are doing is, in fact, art—when they inject their artistic aptitudes and perceptual *habitus* into the general symbolic economy of the real’. However an obvious limitation of Wright’s argument is that, whilst the artists he champions may not do art, his valorisation as a mainstream critic recuperates their cultural production as art by locating it within this privileged sphere. In doing so, he nominates what they do as art, even if this is not a validation that the artists themselves pursue or even desire.

¹⁸Anthony Downey, ‘Towards a Politics of (Relational) Aesthetics’, *Third Text* 21 (3, 2004), 268-269.

¹⁹Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*, 11.

²⁰Ibid., 22. Signs of plagiarism are rampant in Bourriaud’s text. For example, he writes, ‘The form of an artwork issues from a negotiation with the intelligible, which is bequeathed to us. Through it, the artist embarks upon a dialogue. The artistic practice thus resides in the invention of relations between consciousnesses. Each particular artwork is a proposal to live in a shared world, and the artwork of every artist a bundle of relations with the world, giving rise to other relations, and so on and so forth, *ad infinitum*.’ This seems very close to Mikhail’s Bakhtin’s thinking, expressed in *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics*, (London: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), 88. Bakhtin writes: ‘The idea—as it was seen by Dostoevsky, the artist—is not a subjective individual psychological formation with permanent resident rights in a person’s head; no, the idea is inter-individual and intersubjective—the realm of existence is not individual consciousness but dialogic communion *between* consciousnesses. The idea is a live event, played out at the point of dialogic meeting between two or several consciousnesses’.

²¹Mary Anne Francis, ‘In Search of the Author . . . in the Art School’ February 9, 2010, Chelsea College of Art & Design, London. Francis explored our tendency to think about an author as a person, yet we might expand our sense of this by entertaining authors as also being inanimate—non-human authorial agents. Francis offered the example of Marcel Duchamp’s *Three Stoppages Elaton* (1913–1914). The artist dropped three threads from a height equal to their length, which resulted in the measuring system used to produce *Duchamp’s Large Glass* (1915–1923). Chance is only one example of an inanimate author. Others include technological effects and tradition.

²²Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*, 7-8.

²³Ibid.

²⁴Ibid., 29. Bourriaud writes, ‘Now, contemporary art is often marked by non-availability, by being viewable only at a specific time. The example of the performance is the most classic of all. Once the performance is over, all that remains is documentation that should not be confused with the work itself.’

²⁵Ibid., front cover.

²⁶Ibid., 113.

²⁷Ibid., 112.

²⁸Ibid., 29–40. See Bourriaud’s ‘typology’ of relational forms, distinguished by their face-to-face encounter.

²⁹Bishop, ‘Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics’, 65. Though not acknowledged in Bishop’s critique of conviviality in relational art and practice, Bourriaud anticipates this this kind of criticism when he writes, ‘In a Tiravanija exhibition, for example, it is possible to see a form of naïve animation, and lament the slightness and artificiality of the moment of conviviality on offer. To my eye, this would be mistaking the object of the practice. The purpose is not conviviality, but the *product* of this conviviality, otherwise put a complex form that combines a formal structure, objects made available to visitors, and the fleeting image issuing from collective behaviour. In a way, the user value of conviviality intermingles with its exhibition value, within a visual project. It is not a matter of representing angelic worlds, but of producing the conditions thereof.’ (Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*, 83). Bishop tends to take for granted that relational aesthetics *results* in conviviality, whereas Bourriaud’s reflections could indicate conviviality as something that is desirable but difficult to achieve.

³⁰Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* (London: Verso, 1995), 198.

³¹Rosalyn Deutsche as quoted in Bishop, ‘Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics’, 65.

³²Bishop, ‘Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics’, 68.

³³Ibid., 69.

³⁴Bishop, ‘The Social Turn: Collaboration and its Discontents’, 60.

³⁵Chantal Mouffe, ‘Introduction: For an Agonistic Pluralism’ in *The Return of the Political* (London and New York: Verso, 1993), 4. *TheJargonBuster* tweeted her concerns about the relation between ‘agonism’ and ‘antagonism’ in our barcamp discussion. Mouffe seems to acknowledge that ‘antagonism’ is constitutive of ‘agonism’ when she writes, ‘Once we accept the necessity of the political and impossibility of a world without antagonism, what needs to be envisioned is how it is possible under those conditions to create or maintain a pluralist democratic order.’ Extrapolating only a little, we might assume that ‘those’ conditions come together as ‘agonism’, with this understood as a ‘pluralistic democracy’ marked by struggle.

³⁶Claire Bishop, ‘Claire Bishop Responds’, *ArtForum* 44, no. 2 (May 2006).

³⁷Liam Gillick, Letters and Responses: ‘Contingent Factors: A Response to Claire Bishop’s “Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics”’, *October* 115 (Winter 2006), 98.

³⁸Claire Bishop, Letters and Responses: ‘Claire Bishop Responds’ *October* 115 (Winter 2006), 107.

³⁹Simon O’Sullivan, *NJP Reader: Contributions on Artistic Anthropology*, 1 (Gyeonggi-do: Korea, 2009), 52.

13:23



Duchamp's Sister

@CassyAppadurai

Title of SK's contribution: Utterance Literacy and Dialogic Art
#diacamp

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3s



TheJargonBuster

@TheJargonBuste1

SD: Utterances are a unit of expression bound by pauses. #diacamp

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now

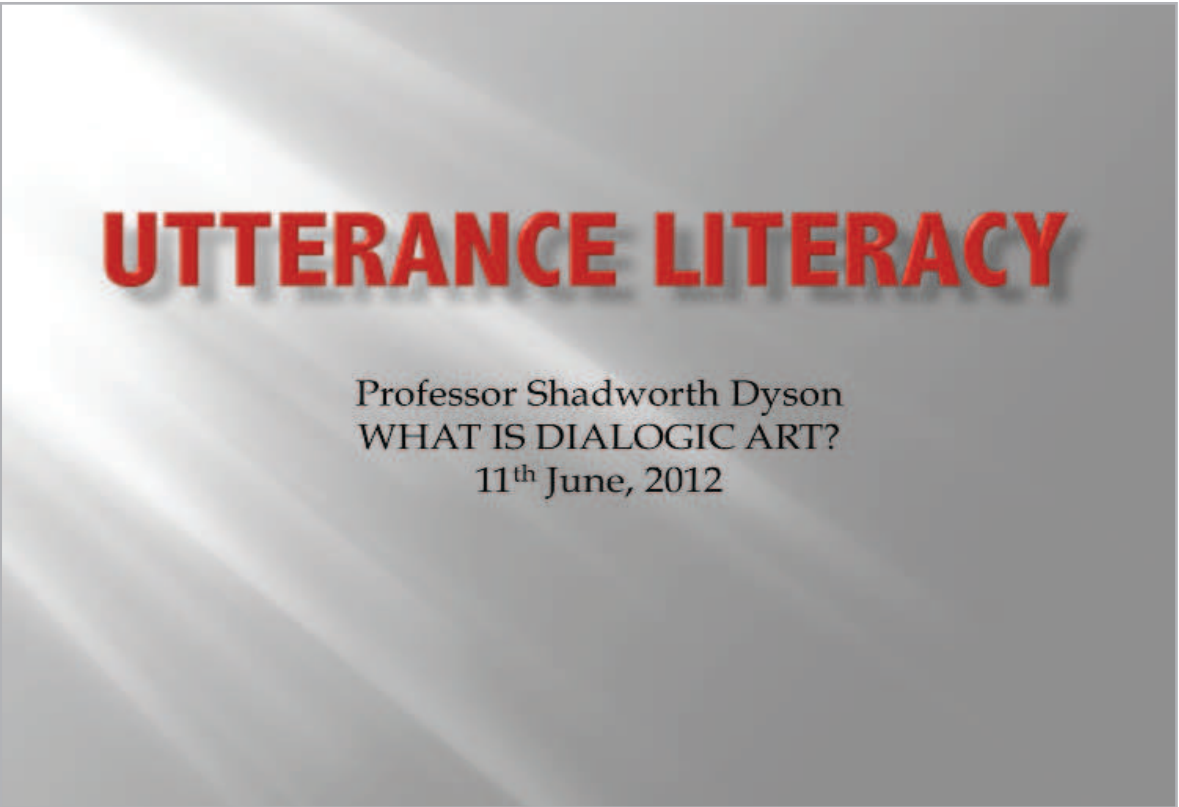


Fig. 6.0

Marsha Bradfield: Shadworth, may I pass you the remote.

Shadworth Dyson: Thank you, yes. Well, I was delighted to receive Marsha’s invitation to address dialogic art from a *Bakhtinian* perspective because, of course, I teach sociolinguistics and literary theory and, consequent to this, dialogue as verbal language is my *ken*. However, the languages of art intrigue me for the same reason that nonverbal languages do, which is to say that there is no end to understanding the complexities of communication, and it is this interest in the ways in which dialogic art might advance this broader project that brings me here *today*.

You will recall that Clark championed ‘the dialogic’ as a way of self-managing dialogue, wherein he defined dialogue as a ‘form of communication that alternates between two or more interlocutors, with their expressions issuing across from or in opposition to each other as the interlocutors converse’. In sociolinguistic theory, these expressions are called *utterances*—units of expression bound by pauses and which link together into chains of call and response, as interlocutors take turns in dialogue. Therefore, what ‘the dialogic’ manages, if we accept Clark’s recommendation, is as much *utterances* as it is *dialogues*. Of course, we may *not* agree ‘the dialogic’ is actually the workhorse of dialogic art, and in that case we may *only* concur that dialogue as intersubjective exchange is the stuff at stake here, and that even *then* the utterance must be singled out.

Clark Chris: Even then?



Fig. 6.1

Characteristics of the Utterance

The utterance is not a sentence	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Does not depend on subject and verb- Not necessarily terminated by a period but instead by pauses, marked by turn taking between or among interlocutors- Can be a single word, ex: "Well!"
Vocalized and sub-vocalized – to another and/or self-talk	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Self-talk (sub-vocalized speech) comprised of utterances that make up a dialogue – consciousness divided between voices, we argue with ourselves- Exchange with an other person – always addressed to someone
Great chain of communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Utterances link together through call and response- An utterance's significance is relative to others in the great chain of communication- The finalisation of utterances prepares them for response
Types of utterances	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Primary (simple) utterances, e.g. "Well!"- Secondary (complex) utterances – utterances comprised of utterances, e.g. a novel
Does not merely refer, also expresses	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Form not neutral – shapes meaning- Meanings are multiple and interdependent – spread across aspects*

*Adapted from M.M. Bakhtin, 'The Problem of Speech Genres,' in *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*, ed. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990): 60 – 102

Fig. 6.2

Shadworth Dyson: Yes, well it occurs to me that if exploring intersubjective exchange as people interact with objects, networks, information and/or each other to produce works of art is what *most* concerns Marsha’s and Allison’s research, they might just as easily have termed it ‘utterance art’ as ‘dialogic art’. After all, why give ‘dialogic’ such pride of place? Presumably they did this because, as a cognate of dialogue, it’s better known than ‘utterance’ and certainly easier to say. But as I will show, the *indispensability* of the utterance recommends it to the student of dialogic art for, when we really examine it, listen to it, feel it and taste it, the utterance gains importance as the *actual* workhorse of dialogue, in contrast to Clark’s ‘the dialogic’.

David Rooksby: So it’s another case of putting the cart before the horse? Get it?

Shadworth Dyson: I suppose that’s one way of putting it, assuming that ‘the dialogic’ is the ‘cart’ in your figuration. Yes, well, the utterance has many functions in dialogue, some of them so essential we take them for granted, and it also has many lessons to teach us about communication, some of them quite surprising.

Clark Chris: We’ll be the judge of that!

Shadworth Dyson: Yes, yes of course. Now turning to some examples, let me first say that, as you are *no doubt* aware, ‘utterance’ is a noun and as such, is, perhaps, no more ambiguous than most, but as a *referent*, ‘utterance’ is quite ambiguous—sneaky, even—hiding itself inside dialogues. So, to flush out the utterance, consider the comparatively straightforward example featured on the slide. (Fig. 6.1) ‘How are you?’ is an utterance, in this case a question, addressed by one interlocutor to another, and ‘Fine.’ is also an utterance, the other interlocutor’s response, and together these two utterances compose a dialogue in a very non-contentious sense. You should all have a handout that catalogues some characteristics of an utterance (Fig. 6.2) and you’ll note that both ‘How are you?’ and ‘Fine.’ qualify, insofar as they are separated by a *change* in speaking subjects—*addressed* to someone and *linked* together in a dialogue, however brief in this case.

Our second example is more *complex*, in that its resemblance to a literal dialogue is *slight*. (Fig 6.3) So who are the interlocutors here? To begin with, there is the driver, who *responds* to the sign by stopping, but there is also the law, the unseen but nevertheless powerful interlocutor that *issues* the utterance demanding the driver’s *response*.

David Rooksby: What did you call those *uttering* the utterances? The ‘interlocutors’? Only you’re saying the interlocutors aren’t always *people*.

Shadworth Dyson: Well, yes, although it was *people* who made the laws in our second example.

David Rooksby: So the driver is in dialogue with the sign.

Shadworth Dyson: The driver is in dialogue with *the law*, and the utterance-as-sign is a concrete *expression* of the law’s authority, because you see, signs like this one interpolate us as social subjects, reminding us that we are bound by the social contracts brokering our shared existence.



Fig. 6.4

Assume the Position @EllaandBrian 13s
#diacamp Stephen Wright proposes 'artistic competency' based on Chomskyan linguistics to describe artistic fluency.
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Assume the Position @EllaandBrian 8s
#diacamp Why 'literacy' and not 'competency' in DA?
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KK Lin: Oh, is this what Clark meant in his PechaKucha when he spoke about *existence* as dialogic and likened it to the weather? Dialogue surrounds us and reminds us that we’re beholden to forces beyond our control? I didn’t really understand earlier but it makes more sense now—

Shadworth Dyson: Yes, well, yes—*vis-à-vis* social contracts. From a *sociolinguistic perspective*, dialogue is *unthinkable* outside of its relation to *language*, language is unthinkable outside its relation to *society* and, based on my brief conversation with Marsha about her research, coupled with Allison’s opening remarks, it seems their investment in dialogic art stems from exploring the complexity of these relations as they organise our existence.


Allison Jones: Yes, in a way. As I said in the welcome address, we were hoping, Shadworth, that your discussion on the utterance would help us develop a more nuanced understanding of communicative experience, thereby enabling us to advance research on dialogue-based art practice.

Shadworth Dyson: And it is with this *firmly* in mind that I now wish to outline what I have come to understand as ‘*utterance literacy*’ and propose it as a skill set for working with the relations at stake in the sociolinguistic dimension of dialogue and hence dialogic art. So what *precisely*, you may be wondering, do I mean by ‘literacy’, and why is Bakhtin’s sociolinguistic theory an *especially* useful basis for the utterance literacy proposed here? I take ‘literacy’ to designate the abilities of ‘reading’ and ‘writing’, but I am *also* using it in a more far-reaching way to indicate skills, ranging from *perceptual acuity* to *practical know-how*, or to *artistic* or *aesthetic adroitness* in *combining utterances* into the *dialogues* composing *dialogic artworks*. We could include practice here, too—*dialogic artworks* and *practice*—because, of course, both are composed of utterances as the *building blocks* of communication.

Well, yes, I see there are tweets from *AssumethePosition*. Thank you for your question, which I shall address, owing to its relevance. The reference to ‘competency’ here refers to the thinking of Noam Chompsky, and you will, of course, know that Chomskyan competence turns on the theory of the *universal*, which we can think of as an innate body of linguistic knowledge that resides with language users and structures *all languages*,¹ enabling us to learn and use them proficiently through mastering syntax and semantics. It is with regret that the merit in this argument for language learning is the stuff of another discussion, but suffice it to say that I cannot see how *universal grammar* applies to *art* because Chompsky’s sense of competency assumes a *universal innateness* that art *simply does not enjoy*.

Marsha Bradfield: Could you say more? I’m not quite sure I understand.


Shadworth Dyson: Well there is no universal grammar of art, is there? No *a priori* embodied knowledge of art—or at least not one that can account sufficiently for art’s polyvalence.



Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai now

SD:DA (art in general) not grounded in aesthetics, as everything that's sensible is aesthetic. #diacamp

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What is dialogic art @DialogicArt 9s

#diacamp Could anyone—in one tweet— explain Rancière's sense of 'aesthetics'? It seems connected to SD's comment about 'sensible response'.

Expand



Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai now

SD:utterance literacy is a way to 'play the game' of dialogue. #diacamp

Expand



Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai now

KL:moves discussion into the medium, i.e. Kruass's post-medium condition. #diacamp

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Brian Updike: Absolutely! Or should I say, ‘not’. But listen, on this subject of *a priori* embodied knowledge, what do you make of something like of Noël Carroll’s theory that aesthetics originates with pattern recognition in evolutionary physiology?² To my mind, this would suggest that aesthetic appreciation is, to some degree, *a priori*.

Shadworth Dyson: Interesting theory, the limitation being that aesthetics as sensuous expression, and the perception thereof, is only *one* aspect of art, and an *extremely* contentious one at that. Not only is *everything* that can be perceived aesthetic, but there is terrific debate among philosophers over what constitutes the aesthetic aspect of something.³

Marsha Bradfield: Could we get back to utterances, please.

Shadworth Dyson: Oh yes, yes of course, but one final comment on the *difference* between literacy and competency. Tell me: Have you ever found yourself in a situation trying to get your bearings—and doing so, moreover, with knowledge that what you are engaged in, whatever that may be, is a *moving* target of sorts? As opposed to ‘competence,’ ‘literacy’, to me, means becoming acquainted with something in *dynamic* flux, not gaining access to what is more or less *fixed*, as in the case of *universal grammar*.


Marsha Bradfield: Perhaps an *example* would—

Shadworth Dyson: For instance, we can speak of literacy in *taste* cultures, including art, wherein ‘taste’ is determined *culturally* and hence subject to both *variation* and *change* as opposed to being something *given*. I would even go so far as to say, however dogmatic this might sound, that it is *precisely* because so *little* is innate to art that we *need* literacies, utterance literacy among them, to help us hone what sociologist Pierre Bourdieu describes as ‘a feel for the game’, a discernment for what is appropriate in response to a given situation based on our experience and knowledge—what makes sense, or is sensible, in a specific context.⁴

Simply put, utterance literacy is *indispensable* to dialogic art because, when it comes to ‘a feel for the game’ of dialogue, the *better* the practitioner’s command of utterances—the more *creatively* as well as precisely they employ them—the more *effectively* both the utterances and the practitioners will be able to respond to the pragmatic demands of their artistic communication, whatever they may be, anticipating possible effects and responses in the sensorium of the artwork, for example.

KK Lin: Um, Shadworth, there’s something here I want to explore, a kind of intuition, okay? So are you familiar with the ongoing debate in contemporary art over this, over *the medium*? I’m thinking here of, well, Rosalind Krauss’s preoccupation with recuperating the medium in our ‘post-medium condition’?⁵ So, has contemporary art lost its medium-specificity, the result being that today we’re producing what Krauss calls ‘art-in-general’—artworks that no longer rely on this kind of material support? I’ll get to my comment in just a minute, but—

Shadworth Dyson: Yes, well, I’m unfamiliar with this debate but I can imagine—




Duchamp's Sister

@CassyAppadurai

KL:How will DA self-realized? Through avant- gardist auto-critique...or some other way? #diacamp

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4s




lonely collaborator

@LCollaborator

DA to make dialogue available in a fresh and expanded sense? I'd settle for it being critical! #diacamp

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now




What is dialogic art

@DialogicArt

DA not critical in your view? #diacamp

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now




lonely collaborator

@LCollaborator

DA NOT critical—or maybe I just can't see how a polyphonic approach could. #diacamp

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5s



What is dialogic art

@DialogicArt

Let's discuss the 'criticality' of DA. Is DA critical and if so, how? #diacamp

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4s

KK Lin: I’m sorry, I don’t mean to interrupt, but I just want to say that I’m really interested in Krauss’s reflections on the ‘post-medium condition’ and photography. Could I just outline two aspects, very quickly? Thanks, so much. So, okay, in Krauss’s view, the photograph shifted from being an aesthetic or *historical object* to being a *theoretical* one by the 1960s, and this shift precipitated a kind of ontological *cave-in*.⁶ This must have been disorienting for photographic practice. But this ontological instability was also productive, because, um, it helped photography to deconstruct its own significance. So, photography critically engaged with photography? Or, as Jeff Wall puts it, photography went through an intense stage of *auto-critique*. He describes this as a kind of rite of passage for *avant-garde* art forms, with auto-critique being part of their self-realisation as a *legitimate* approach to practice.⁷ This was part of photography’s self-realisation as an *art form* as compared with an aesthetic or historical object.

Shadworth Dyson: I’m not sure how this relates to the utterance literacy—
KK Lin: And maybe it doesn’t. I don’t know. Maybe I’m off on a tangent. But I’d just like to propose, I mean, I’m *wondering* if dialogue is *the medium* of dialogic art? If this were the case, and with the history of photography in mind, is it possible that dialogic art is, um, you know, *auto-critiquing dialogue*? Could this be part of dialogic art’s project of self-realisation, in keeping with the *avant-gardist* tradition of auto-critique?

So that’s the first of my two questions—three, actually.
John Johnson: Hang on. These questions strike me as being pretty important. Could you repeat them?

KK Lin: The first one is, ‘Is dialogue the *medium* of dialogic art?’ Or maybe it’s an *alternative* to a medium, with dialogic art being a case of ‘art-in-general’? I’m also wondering, ‘How does auto-critique figure in dialogic art’s development—or not?’ Wall, for example, speaks about auto-critique occurring in photography through conceptual art. Conceptualism was an attempt to refresh this medium by making it available to the world in a new way.⁸ I guess, um, I’m just wondering: Might dialogic art have a similar ambition? To make dialogue available to the world in a *fresh*—and *expanded*—sense?

Krauss says—Wall, too—that part of photography’s auto-critique was to make itself available as a *tool* for enacting and documenting art-in-general, and that this really came to the fore under conceptualism in the 1960s and 1970s.⁹ So is *this* closer to how we’re thinking about dialogue—and perhaps dialogic art more generally? This is a little muddled, but—

Shadworth Dyson: I’m struck by this question of tool or medium. Yes, well—
KK Lin: There’s a *third* option, too, if I may just go on for one more minute, Shadworth. Thanks, so much. I promise not to take up too much more of your presentation time. Okay, maybe there is a drive to *invent* a medium in dialogic art by mining the support of dialogue in its practice?^{10*} I’m not sure these



three things are mutually exclusive in dialogic art’s overall project—the *auto-critique of dialogue*, *dialogue as a tool for art-in-general* and a drive to *invent a new medium*. Do you see what I mean?

Marsha Bradfield: No, I’m not sure I do—especially not the last bit.

KK Lin: About *inventing* a new medium? Could be I’m just thinking aloud here but, um, keeping in mind the post-medium condition and art-in-general, might dialogic art come together as something *other* than an artwork defined by its medium or something else. Maybe it’s very straightforward. Maybe it’s *practice*—could it be that dialogic art places a greater onus on *practice* as an *emergent process*? After all, you’re incubating dialogic art in your *practice*-based research, right Marsha? Maybe—

Shadworth Dyson: Forgive me for interrupting, KK, but I would like to respond to the medium-versus-tool question by noting that ‘medium’ is *not* a word Bakhtin favours in his ruminations on dialogue. I would wager this stems from his taking *language*—both verbal and nonverbal forms of communication—for granted as the medium here, because, you see, ‘genre’ is a more salient concern. Now it is your turn to bear with *me* as I make a few general comments about genre that link this back to ‘utterance literacy’, thereby avoiding our discussion drifting too far afield.

Now the first thing to say is that genre is by no means a straightforward designation. There is *terrific* debate regarding what constitutes a ‘genre’ in genre studies,¹¹ but this much is generally agreed—that as processes of *systematisation*,¹² genres turn on *nominological* and *typological* functions, which is to say the division of the world into *forms*, *types of forms* and the *naming* of these forms. To this extent, it is tempting to think of genre divisions as akin to *orderings*, such as botany or zoology, yet there are limits to this analogy for, when it comes to genres, their distinction is by no means scientific.¹³ While there are many reasons for this, one pertains to genres being *cultural forms* that are subject to *cultural norms* as opposed to *scientific laws*.

To explore genre studies in any depth and breadth and determine their specific significance for dialogic art is the stuff of another barcamp contribution—perhaps another barcamp! Suffice to say in passing that, for Bakhtin, genre is a way of *conceptualising reality*.¹⁴ When he notes that utterances take many forms—a wide range of speech genres—he does so with the *express purpose* of acknowledging that the *choice* of genre shapes communicative exchange, owing to how it represents the world.¹⁵

Marsha Bradfield: I think I understand what you’re saying, Shadworth, but—

Shadworth Dyson: By this I mean that we expect something quite different from the genre of a horror movie than we do from a musical, because each accomplishes different things and in *different ways*. Both involve conflict and resolution and both invite catharsis, but they see the world in distinct ways, and this *difference* is manifested in the values and, by extension, the ideologies they advance.

John Johnson: So everything is political and genre is no exception.



Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai 7s

SD: the politics of genre resides in part in how it organizes social interaction. #diacamp

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Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai now

ES: Contemporary art is non-generic. #diacamp

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Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai 7s

SD: Contemporary art is generically hybrid. #diacamp

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Shadworth Dyson: Yes, well, yes! And one way that genres are political is in the ways in which their forms *organise* social interaction, and this extends to the speech genres of dialogue. The form of my utterances—the diction I use, the tone of my voice, my choice of grammatical conventions, the aspects I emphasise through repetition—all these things shape the significance of this expression for me and those to whom it’s addressed. Is the genre of my utterance polite, formal, aggressive, dramatic, full of jargon? What purpose does my expression seek to accomplish by *force* of adopting one genre as opposed to another? Because, you see, if we accept that each genre sees the world through a specific lens, the question then becomes, ‘What view is at stake in their form?’¹⁶ And this brings me back to Bakhtin’s concern with *form-shaping ideology*, to which I earlier referred. When genres organise something, an artwork, perhaps, they have performative effect *vis-à-vis* socio-political consequence and—

Ella Stone: *Oui, mais*, this is in keeping with a structuralist approach, is it not? Isn’t the idea, Shadworth, that genres normalise ideologies and, in so doing, service dominant power structures by reproducing them?¹⁷ We might think, for example, of the ‘Dear Jane’ letter in Calle’s *Take Care of Yourself* as a genre that normalises patriarchy, a genre in which men—what’s the expression?—call the shots.

Clark Chris: Ella, that’s a stretch!

Ella Stone: *Oui, je sais*. It’s a provocation. I know that’s just one point of view. There are, of course, others,¹⁸ and, were genre the focus of your contribution, Shadworth, we would surely unpick these. But, going back to the idea that genres *present* and *perform* the world in *particular* ways, and, assuming I accept this position—though I’m not really sure we’ve fleshed it out sufficiently for me to do so—but assuming yes, what does this mean for something like what KK referred to as ‘art-in-general’ in contrast to popular culture? In the case of a mainstream Hollywood romance, we can expect the man to ‘get’ the woman and then to live happily ever after in keeping with this genre of film, but is it not rare for contemporary artworks to be so straightforward?

Shadworth Dyson: Yes, well, yes, and using *Take Care of Yourself* as a case in point, I would suggest the artwork is *non-generic* to the extent that it comes together as *generically hybrid* and by this, I mean to say that the genres, which present in the respondents’ responses as they draw on diverse personal experience and professional experience, do not so much disappear in *Take Care of Yourself* as they are *cast* into *relief* through their *juxtaposition*. Discerning their significance makes genre knowledge all the *more important*—for the artists and for those encountering *Take Care of Yourself*. Both Bakhtin and Derrida are quite clear about their sense that texts always resonate in relation to pre-existing genres and, as Derrida puts it, ‘there is no genre-less text’.¹⁹

Now, other scholars have nuanced this by saying that, as modes of cultural organisation, genres link together producer, consumer, topic, medium



What is dialogic art @DialogicArt

Consider the distinction between 'peer-to- peer' to exchange and 'peer review'.

Expand

now

and occasion by controlling the producers’ behaviour on the front end and the consumers’ expectations on the back.²⁰ And, of course, yes, we do *expect* something *particular* from a Hollywood romance. So the question is, ‘How should we think about these expectations and the experiences they engender?’ I would suggest as an answer that we might conceptualise them as *social processes*.

We have, of course, already spoken in some depth today about the ways in which our barcamp contrasts with a standard academic conference as a social process of knowledge production—or at least producing meaning in some way—in that a barcamp cashiers socio-ideological relations through its onus on *user-generated discussion* unfolding *amongst* its interlocutors, thereby composing the barcamp’s explicitly dialogic form. This contrasts with the academic conference as a *less* dialogic form, by force of its greater emphasis on linear arguments elaborated and ideally resolved by *individual* interlocutors in advance of their discussion with a community of peers. Based on the question, ‘What is dialogic art?,’ for example, the barcamp genre is quite different, emphasising *dynamic, multi-centred exchange*, with *co-produced meaning* arising *in situ* and being *sui generis*—which is to say that it is specific and situated in this context.

Allison Jones: Shadworth, your discussion of genres is certainly relevant for dialogic art, and I expect Marsha will speak this afternoon about her own foray in the world of genre—reality-TV in particular. And, as much as I see this as a useful primer for this discussion, I’m also aware that this contribution has moved away from ‘utterance literacy’ and I’m slightly concerned about the time and—

Shadworth Dyson: Point taken. And yet, our ad hoc look at genre sets up a rather interesting transition into my next section, which concerns Bakhtin’s sociolinguistic theory as a particular *genre*—a specific type of analysis. And—

KK Lin: But what about *the medium* of dialogic art? What about its *critical capacity*—for auto-critique or other types of critique.

Allison Jones: Could we return to these questions at the end?

KK Lin: That’s fine by me—but can we just make sure that we *do* come back to them?

Shadworth Dyson: Yes, of course. Well, you’re all no doubt wondering what in particular makes Bakhtin’s sociolinguistic theory of the utterance useful for dialogic art. The answer is that it refuses a purely linguistic approach because, you see, linguistics is understood as the *scientific* study of languages,²¹ whereas Bakhtin sees language as a *socio-cultural* rather than a scientific phenomenon, for reasons that should soon become clear.

For as an alternative to linguistics, Bakhtin offers *meta-linguistics*, an idea that we find in a germinal sense in one of his earliest works, *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*, published in 1928.²² Here, Bakhtin examines language as the basis for Marxist ideology, *vis-à-vis* knowledge mediated through signs. The proto-meta-linguistics he proposes in *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language* attempts to move *beyond* two then-existing schools of linguistic thought, those being *subjectivism* and *abstract objectivism*.

Language [langue] is speech less speaking [parole]. It is the whole set of linguistic habits which allows an individual to understand and be understood.

---Ferdinand de Saussure

Fig. 6.4



TheJargonBuster @TheJargonBuster1 5s
Ferdinand de Saussure is a Swiss Linguist who developed structural linguistics. #diacamp
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What is dialogic art @DialogicArt now
#diacamp not only/but also; thresholds and cusps = dominant metaphors.
Expand Reply Delete Favorite

[Meta-linguistics is the study of] the word not in a system of language and not in a ‘text’ excised from dialogic interaction, but precisely within the sphere of dialogic interaction itself, that is, in that sphere where discourse lives an authentic life.

---Mikhail Bakhtin

Fig. 6.5

Now, the failing of subjectivism, on Bakhtin’s view, is in holding language to be the province of *individual psychology*.²³ For him, language cannot be understood as individualistically psychological, but abstract objectivism is equally problematic on the other extreme, and we can think of Saussure’s structural linguistics as a familiar instance of this. Bakhtin takes issue, in particular, with linguistics’ abstraction of language from its everyday use into a code,²⁴ [something we might think of as akin to universal grammar,] and his meta-linguistics both critiques and builds on Saussure’s theory by overcoming its dichotomisation into either *langue* or *parole*. And to remind us of what this split entails, let me summarise it by saying that, if *langue* refers to the relations between synchronic signs, the body of signs in concurrent operation within the same system, *parole* describes an individual’s everyday *speech*, with its heterogeneity placing it beyond linguistic study, at least on Saussure’s account.²⁵ (Fig 6.4)

Yet it is exactly this semantic and syntactic *heterogeneity* that Bakhtin observes in the utterance and that so fascinates him, making it the workhorse of his meta-linguistics, which seek to account for a greater range of communication than linguistics will allow. Bakhtin posits meta-linguistics as ‘[the exploration of] the word not in a system of language and not in a “text” excised from dialogic interaction, but precisely within the sphere of dialogic interaction itself, that is, in that sphere where discourse lives an authentic life’.²⁶ (Fig. 6.5) Therefore, from a meta-linguistic perspective, it is not only that the meaning of *signs* expressed in the utterance is determined in *relation* to all other signs in the syntactic sign system, but that the demands of their *immediate context* also come into play, this being where the authentic life of the word as utterance is lived out. The utterance bridges Saussure’s split between *langue* and *parole* by insisting on a remit that is and/also, and meta-linguistics promotes an understanding of language as social through and through. So viewed through the lens of sociolinguistic theory, the utterance emerges as a *double environment*—a *social matrix* both within and without. *Without*, it encounters and interacts with other utterances as they link together in the great chain of communication, while *within*, it is social, absorbing and responding to the other utterances composing the environment of its expression through a process of *call* and *response*.

Cassy Appadurai: Shadworth, could you explain how utterances absorb each other?

Shadworth Dyson: Yes, well, returning to our prosaic example, ‘How are you?’ the response, ‘Fine.’, refers back to question—and so, too, does the question anticipate a response. So you can see that one way utterances absorb other utterances is as *rejoinders*.

We might also think about reported speech. Earlier, I referred to Clark’s definition of dialogue and, in doing so, *absorbed* his utterance into my own, while at the same time *inflecting* it with local significance, resonant with its

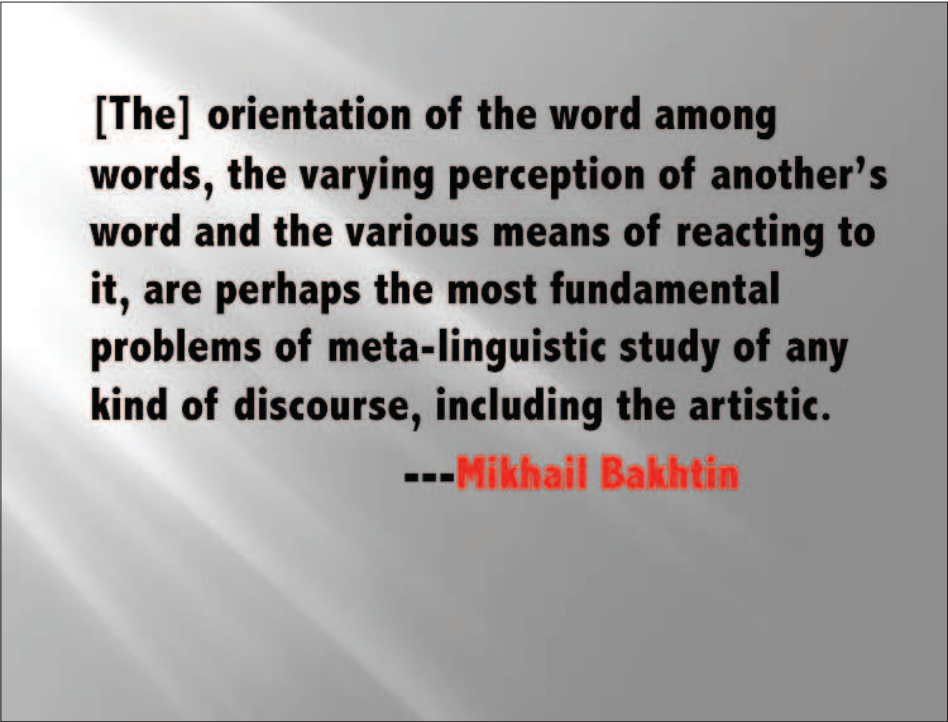


Fig. 6.6



Fig. 6.7

immediate enunciation. To call into question Clark’s contention—his view that ‘the dialogic’ is the workhorse of dialogic art—and posit *the utterance* instead, I had to *restate* his position so as to engage it in dialogue.

David Rooksby: So let me get this straight. It’s all about dialogue being in dialogue *being in dialogue*. I’m assuming there’s dialogue between the inside and outside of the utterance, too, right?

Shadworth Dyson: Yes, quite right—that is, if you are referring to them being enjoined in a *reciprocal relation*, by which I mean a relation that is performed, experienced or felt on both sides.

Cassy Appadurai: Speaking of restating positions: We’ve heard from Clark that ‘the dialogic’ names a self-management strategy for dialogue. And we’ve heard from KK that ‘dialogic’ refers to reflexivity. Ella and Brian both took up the ‘dialogic’ qualifying dialogic art from the perspective of *collaboration* and spoke about this type of art representing the *social character of its production*. Now you, Shadworth, are coming at ‘dialogic art’ from the perspective of ‘utterance literacy,’ and you’ve just said that utterances depend on *reciprocal relations*. So the ‘dialogic’ in dialogic art is another name for the reciprocity that you’ve described. It’s like what you’re calling ‘utterance literacy’ is actually closer to a literacy for working with *reciprocities*.

Shadworth Dyson: Yes, well, there’s more to this literacy than that. I shall turn to an example momentarily and explore this in further depth and breadth, but first I’d like to say a few words about the structure of this lesson. I’ve organised it around a quote from Bakhtin, which I would suggest provides a kind of *directive* for practitioners of dialogic art by indicating areas of *particular* import. With reference to meta-linguistics, Bakhtin writes, ‘Therefore the orientation of a word among words, the varying perception of another’s word and the various means of reacting to it, are perhaps the most fundamental problems for the meta-linguistic study of any kind of discourse, including the artistic’.²⁷ (Fig. 6.6)

So, in the time remaining we’ll consider each of these three ‘problems’ by way of an example of dialogic art. As I’ve said, my interest here is to demonstrate the ways in which utterance literacy is an important skill set for practitioners of this art, so our example is *Interview* by Hans Ulrich Obrist and Hans-Peter Feldmann. (Fig. 6.7)

Now, when Marsha approached me about speaking today, I proposed exploring utterance literacy vis-à-vis one of Dostoevsky’s novels, but she suggested that I consider a contemporary artwork instead and, knowing my penchant for print, she sent me this book-length interview between the two Hanses. I understand from Marsha that Hans-Peter Feldmann is a German visual artist principally known for his photography and Hans Ulrich Obrist is a Swiss critic and curator, who Marsha tells me has made an art of interviewing artists.²⁸ As you can see from the sample page in the slide (Fig. 6.8), *Interview* moves between Obrist’s questions and Feldmann’s images, the latter being the *nonverbal utterances* that the photographer offers in response to the interviewer’s *verbal* ones.



Fig. 6.8

lonely collaborator

@LCollaborator

now

Why talk about the usual suspects, producing their reputation and social capital! #diacamp

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Phil Hind

@PhilHind1

28s

See also AN Whitehead's theory of contrasts for an alternative take. #diacamp

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So the first of Bakhtin’s three meta-linguistic problems pertains to the ‘words among words’. In Bakhtin’s view, all words can be utterances, but not all utterances are words. An utterance can be a single word as in the case of ‘STOP’,²⁹ but it can also compose an entire book, such as *Interview*. Bakhtin calls utterances that are composed of utterances secondary types, whereas ‘STOP’ is a primary one.³⁰

KK Lin: But a stop *sign* would be a secondary utterance, wouldn’t it? Because it’s composed of sign, the word, the red paint, its location at an intersection and the law it invokes? Am I getting this right?

Shadworth Dyson: Yes, precisely, KK. And, given what has been said so far, where are the utterances in *Interview*?

David Rooksby: Like you said, the questions and pictures.

Shadworth Dyson: And how are these utterances articulated as well as differentiated from each other and from their context?

David Rooksby: Meaning?

Shadworth Dyson: Yes, well, you’ll recall that an utterance is a unit of expression *bounded* by *pauses*. In the case of verbal dialogue, this occurs when an interlocutor takes a turn, expresses himself and then *pauses*, inviting a *response*. So how are the utterances *bounded* here?

KK Lin: Are they bounded by the question mark that terminates the question? And also set off from their surroundings in black type against a white page? Sorry to be so thick but is this what you mean by being ‘bounded’?

Shadworth Dyson: Yes, precisely. Very good again, KK. I am not an art historian, but I would suggest we think about this as a figure-ground relation.³¹ Formal strategies such as *contrast* differentiate utterances from each other.

David Rooksby: *More* reciprocity.

Clark Chris: *Relativity*, too. Black is black because it’s not white.

Cassy Appadurai: So, *chiaroscuro*—light/dark visual value. More dialogues. Forgive me, Shadworth, but I thought ‘utterance literacy’ would investigate something closer to the threshold of intersubjective exchange—communication between or across interlocutors.

Shadworth Dyson: Correct, and this is what we’re looking at here in *Interview*. However, higher-level exploration into these thresholds—‘cusps’, as someone tweeted—depends on basic acts of recognition that make us cognisant of *how* communication is transacted through its *linguistic* and *non-linguistic* aspects. The principles can be applied to varying degrees of ambiguity, but evaluating this depends on our *acuity*—which is what we’re building here, as acuity is a core skill of ‘utterance literacy’.

David Rooksby: You must walk before you can run, Grasshopper.

Shadworth Dyson: Yes, well—this brings us to the second fundamental ‘problem’ that preoccupies Bakhtin’s theory of meta-linguistics, by which I mean ‘perception of another’s word’. What might this mean in the case of *Interview*?

Tina Wiseman: That we perceive Feldmann’s images and Obrist’s questions by *reading* them.

David Rooksby: Obviously.



Fig. 6.9



Tina Wiseman: But it is also obvious that more than one direction is possible, across question and answer on the same page, and across questions across pages. Isn't this a cheeky little book, *teasing* us to read diagonally, across both pages, moving from 'What couldn't you live without' across to the tearful Madonna. (Fig. 6.9) The humour is *very* Feldmann—the signature of his collections, his orderings of images that he curates into artist books.

Shadworth Dyson: So an invitation to read transgressively, in a way that confounds *Interview's* prosaic structure of moving from left-to-right, front-to-back and top-to-bottom.

Maeve Cutty: You know, luv, *Interview* is what Roland Barthes would call a 'text'. It's a *weave* of signifiers activated through readings and re-readings as, for instance, we *move across* language and image,³² across their material expressions—their textual and inter-textual presence on the pages as they *inform each other*.

David Rooksby: More reciprocity. I'm starting a list.

Shadworth Dyson: Yes, however, *Interview* is also a text in Barthes's sense by virtue of achieving—and Bakhtin shares this view—*language relations*.³³ Barthes speaks about the text being a place where no language dominates and languages circulate,³⁴ which accords with Bakhtin's theory of heteroglossia as the constant *flux* and *clash* of languages, in this case the German and the English as well as the verbal and the visual.

Anne Lang: In *Interview*? Really? You know, I'm not seeing much clash here—at least not in comparison to the agonism in the commentary Brian spoke about. I mean, when you said you were going to offer an example of a dialogic artwork, I was expecting something along the lines of Tino Sehgal's live events. Do you know this artist's practice? I experienced *This Object of That Object* at the ICA in 2005.³⁵ We entered the gallery and were sort of surrounded by several people moving backwards and chanting, 'The objective of this work is to become the object of the discussion'. After a while, the performers said the artwork was over and fell to the ground. And, you know, predictably, I guess, people reacted in different ways. Some left and others stayed, including me, and we talked. And I was very much aware of being in dialogue, you know?

Shadworth Dyson: Yes, well—agonism. Granted, the discursive struggle in *Interview* is *subtler* than in your example of physical encounter, Anne, or the commentary to which Brian referred. The contest, however, is still there in Obrist and Feldmann's exchange—in the push and pull of meaning across the visual and verbal, between the English and the German, with the languages informing each other through their reciprocal relation as they jockey for our attention. Take a look at the slide (6.9) and take a moment to think how different our perception of the Madonna would be *without* Obrist's question. Feldmann's visual response leads me to think he doesn't like Catholicism—assuming, this is *in fact* a Madonna—or perhaps Feldmann takes exception to all organised religion, or—

David Rooksby: Or to emotional girls!

[The] orientation of the word among words, the varying perception of another's word and the various means of reacting to it, are perhaps the most fundamental problems of meta-linguistic study of any kind of discourse, including the artistic.

---Mikhail Bakhtin

Fig. 6.10

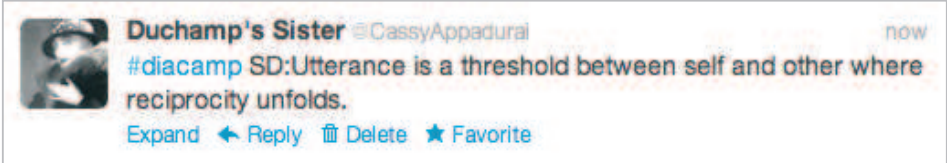


Fig. 6.11

Allison Jones: Shadworth, if we could return to ‘perceiving another’s word’ in the quote from Bakhtin, I’d like to know how these two aspects relate—the other and his or her word? And could you elaborate on why, in particular, you deem utterance literacy important for dialogic art?

Shadworth Dyson: Surely by now we can agree that part of ‘utterance literacy’s’ import for dialogic art relates to its capacity to engage the wide range of reciprocal relations that come together in dialogues based on what Bakhtin calls ‘the simultaneity of difference’.³⁶ Dialogue results from the interplay of *unmerged entities*, which is to say that it is a live event played out at the point of dialogic meeting between them as *distinct* beings or things.³⁷ We might think of the plurality of interpretations of the email in the case of *Take Care of Yourself*, and the relation between the questions and the images in *Interview*. Embedded in Bakhtin’s reference to ‘perceiving another’s word’ is an *unmerged relation* between interlocutors—between *addresser* and *addressee*—that is mediated *by* the word, or the utterance, which is in turn a threshold that presupposes an *other*, the inference rendering the utterance an intersubjective relation.³⁸ So who are the interlocutors in *Interview*?

Tina Wiseman: Well, there’s Obrist, Feldmann—and us, of course.

Shadworth Dyson: Precisely! Oh yes, *Interview* knowingly unfolds for *our* benefit. Obrist’s questions are addressed *to* Feldmann yet, as Tina was quick to note, they are *concurrently* directed at us—at those encountering *Interview*, the Julias and Julians.

KK Lin: The ‘Julias’ and ‘Julians’?

Shadworth Dyson: Earlier, someone tweeted that we might use these names, ‘Julia’ and ‘Julian’ to personalise—to humanise—what I would otherwise term ‘second-order interlocutors’. The tweeter’s naming implied a concern to acknowledge this referent as a person with his own unique past, present and future.

So we are the second-order interlocutors—the Julias and Julians—in our encounter with *Interview*. We don’t *literally* alter the primary source but instead produce a secondary and overlapping account, however temporary, as we engage *Interview*.

Anne Lang: And discursively produce it.

Shadworth Dyson: Yes. So when it comes to perceiving ‘the other’s word’ in dialogic art vis-à-vis ‘utterance literacy,’ this entails dialogic artists *anticipating* the responses of second-order interlocutors as links in the great chain of communication comprising the work of art. For in the same way that Bakhtin *insists* there is no dialogue without unmerged consciousnesses in communication, there is no artwork without *response*, which makes an artwork’s second-order interlocation—in *potentia*—constitutive of its first-order one.

Marsha Bradfield: And what about the ‘superaddressee’ that you spoke of earlier today?

Shadworth Dyson: Yes, well, this is a figure that exists *wholly* in the interlocutors’ minds, by which I mean that it is an *authority*—a space for projection—above and beyond the interlocutors’ *immediate* exchange, one whose *absolute responsive understanding* is *presupposed*. I assume that Bakhtin terms this an

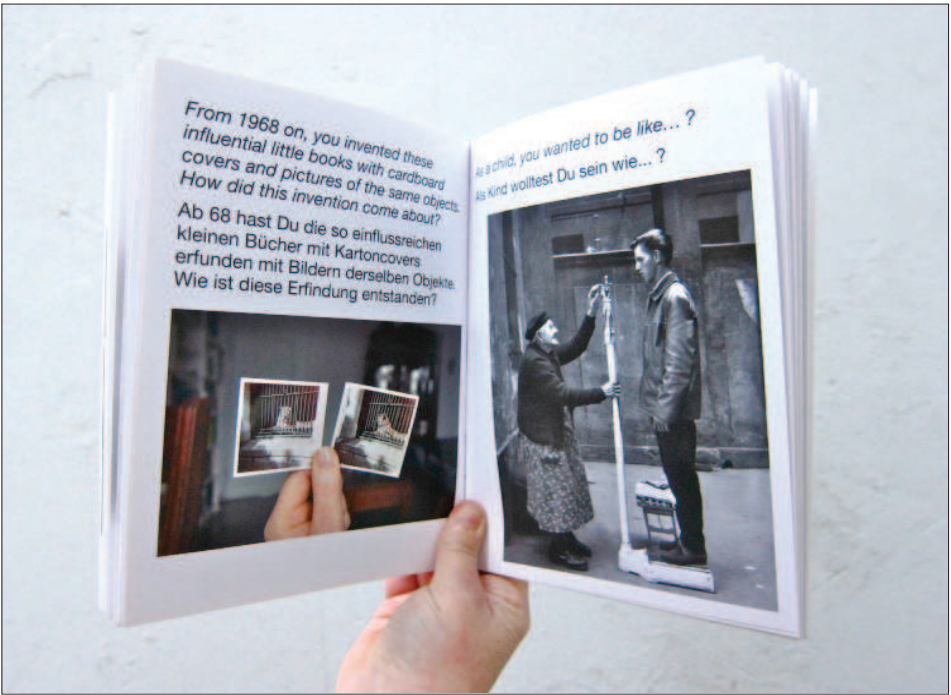


Fig. 6.12



‘addressee’, as opposed to an ‘interlocutor’, to emphasise their significance as such, though you are correct in your observation that there are, in fact, *three* interlocutor types in the case of art. There are the *first-order interlocutors* who produce the artwork; the *second-order interlocutors* who interpret the artwork; and the *superaddressee* to whom both the first-order and second-order interlocutors’ utterances are *addressed*, above and beyond the immediate interlocutors with whom they are directly engaged.

This relation among the interlocutors brings us to the third and final ‘problem’ identified in Bakhtin’s reflections on meta-linguistics catalogued in the quote. Recalling it in its entirety: ‘Therefore,’ writes Bakhtin, ‘the orientation of a word among words, the varying perception of another’s word and the various means of reacting to it, are perhaps the most fundamental problems for the meta-linguistic study of any kind of discourse, including the artistic’.³⁹ (Fig. 6.10) So far, we have considered the questions and images composing *Interview* to better understand the relations among utterances in this dialogic work of art, and we have taken up the perception of these utterances by discussing our encounter and interpretation of *Interview* as second-order interlocutors. What remains to be explored is ‘the various means of reacting to another’s word’ *vis-à-vis* this dialogic artwork, and this is both the most interesting and most complex aspect of ‘utterance literacy’ in my opinion—and here I am referring, of course, to the *addressivity* of utterances.

Alright, so, we know that, when it comes to *Interview*, the utterances are addressed to *both* the first- and second-order interlocutors, yet there are *other* ways of thinking about an utterance’s addressivity. In addition to it being addressed to a person, it is *also* addressed to its *theme*⁴⁰—what it’s about, its subject. In the case, for instance, of Feldmann’s image of the tiger behind bars, (Fig. 6.11) we may interpret the theme variously as an outing to the zoo, the enclosure of animals and so on and so forth.

Oh. I read this page as a reference to *Interview*. It’s like holding the book in your hands. Here, like this. (Fig. 6.12) Doesn’t the thumb, between the two images with their white borders, refer to how we, as second-order interlocutors, might engage with the book? Come to think of it, isn’t the *formal strategy* here similar to that in *Chantier Barbès-Rochechouart*, with an image of the authorial process nested within itself?

That’s interesting. Would you pass me the book please, so I can get a closer look?

Yes, I can see that, but I think there is another reading of the *Interview’s* addressivity to its theme. Non-artworlders may not know about Feldmann ambivalent relationship with the dominant art world.⁴¹

Thumbs his nose at the *establishment*—just enough to give his practice the *aura* of institutional critique without *actually* receiving threats of excommunication.



Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai now

[#diacamp](#) Taking a break from tweeting; this discussion is too dense for me to keep up!

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- Tina Wiseman:

I was thinking along those lines, too. For me, this ambivalence is captured in the *earnestness* of his tongue-in-cheek response to Obrist’s questions. So there’s something about the way Feldmann uses humour in his interview that conveys disease—their uneasy relations.
- Shadworth Dyson:

Forgive me, Tina, as I am not as familiar with Feldmann’s and Obrist’s relations as I should perhaps be; however, your comments strike me as *sociological* in interest and this, together with KK’s formalist one, means that we now have *two* readings of *Interview* in play and crucially, this range accords with a meta-linguistic perspective; *specifically*, its concern with cultivating an appreciation for the *multiple* ways in which utterances are directed at their *themes*, at other *interlocutors* and at their immediate spatiotemporal *horizon*, while concurrently attending to this horizon as it *pervades* them, becoming a constituent aspect of their significance.⁴²
- David Rooksby:

Another reciprocal relation. I should have a bell and ring it every time one comes up.
- Marsha Bradfield:

Alright, so, on KK’s reading, Feldmann’s image refers back to *Interview*?
- Shadworth Dyson:

Correct. And Bakhtin speaks about this kind of relation as a *social act* embedded in a *social context* with these things—the act and the context—reciprocally informing each other.⁴³ In this case, the tiger image informs our reading of *Interview* and *Interview* informs our reading of the tiger image.
- David Rooksby:

Ding ding!
- Shadworth Dyson:

Yes, well, hmm. Reciprocity also pervades Tina’s reading, although in this case, it is not *Interview*—not the book as an object *qua* artwork—that organises the spatiotemporal horizon, but rather Feldmann’s and Obrist’s *exchange* as a kind of sociological *index* of what Tina referred to as the ‘dominant art world’.
- John Johnson:

Which we’re actually *producing*—or *entrenching*—through our discussion of Obrist’s and Feldmann’s exchange as *indexical*! I’m not sure I’m really comfortable with this.
- Shadworth Dyson:

I’m more immediately concerned to observe that, together, Tina’s and KK’s readings point to the utterance as the *double environment* I spoke of earlier—a social matrix both within and without.

KK’s reading foregrounds the *internal sociality* of *Interview* as a secondary utterance composed of primary ones, with the tiger image drawing attention to the relation between these two types *vis-à-vis* self-referencing *Interview* as an object *qua* artwork.

By contrast, Tina’s reading is concerned with the *social matrix* that surrounds *Interview*—the artwork indexes the kind of intersubjective relations that organise and produce the art field. Common to both readings, however, is the *reciprocity* between the utterance and its spatiotemporal horizon.
- John Johnson:

Ding ding.
- Cassy Appadurai:

If I understand you correctly, and I do apologise for the repetition but I’m still struggling to get this straight. You’re saying that, in KK’s reading, the nested self-reference informs our understanding of the artwork—assuming we accept this self-reference as fact. On Tina’s reading, self-reference points





TheJargonBuster @TheJargonBuster1

Walter Benjamin: German Jewish philosopher and social critic.

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now

to the interlocutors’ relations as *cultural producers*. So, in addition to the utterances in *Interview* addressing the interlocutors, they are also addressing *Interview* and the dominant art world to which it belongs by virtue of being a work of contemporary art. It’s art about art, twice over. Is that the gist of it? Shadworth, you have five minutes.

Allison Jones:

Shadworth Dyson: Yes, thank you Allison. Yes, Cassy, I think your understanding is *correct*. Now, with so little time remaining, and with KK’s questions still outstanding, let me briefly conclude by looking at the utterance’s addressivity *vis-à-vis* its *verbal* and *nonverbal* aspects.

The *verbal* aspect of the utterance refers to its *repeatable* part. Imagine I asked you the same question that Obrist put to Feldmann, but in the context of this barcamp. ‘What don’t you like at all?’ I’d be most surprised if you responded with the image of a weeping Madonna, though you could easily say ‘audit culture’ and I would understand why—it’s been a concern in the discussion composing the barcamp’s spatiotemporal horizon. To repeat: The verbal aspect of the utterance is repeatable; it can mean different things in different contexts.

Anne Lang:

So the context of an utterance has direct bearing on its specific and situated significance.⁴⁵

Shadworth Dyson:

Precisely. However, the *nonverbal aspect* of the utterance’s addressivity—specifically, its *intonation*—is *also* context-dependent. If the interlocutors’ spatiotemporal horizon is partly responsible for the utterance’s immediate meaning, an interlocutor’s intonation *conveys* his or her social evaluation of this horizon or a specific aspect of it.⁴⁶ We can think of intonation as an interlocutor’s attempt to *objectify* their expression in line with what they *intend* to communicate but are unable to express outright.⁴⁷ Is the interlocutor’s intonation sarcastic, sympathetic, sensual? Can we *hear* the interlocutor’s *intention* in his *voice*? In fact, Bakhtin holds the intonation saturating an utterance’s addressivity to be one of the *most sensitive indicators* of the intersubjectivity transacting the interlocutors’ social relations, and this is *precisely* because intonation operates on the border of what can and cannot be said.

Anne Lang:

You don’t mean the ineffable?

Shadworth Dyson:

No. Rather, in what can be expressed in keeping with *social norms*. Intonation enables us to say more by dint of its ambiguity, and this creates space for plural interpretations. Was Mr. So-and-so being sincere or sarcastic when he said he enjoyed my barcamp presentation? As Bakhtin notes in *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*, ‘we never say or hear words, we say and hear what is true or false, good or bad, important or unimportant, pleasant or unpleasant’.⁴⁸ Yet when it comes to *intonation*, determining what is *actually* heard or said is by no means straightforward.

John Johnson:

Well *obviously* that’s the whole point of Feldmann’s ambivalent humour. It’s a wily form of institutional critique. So the critique is *there* but it’s *not* there, making it a kind of *duplicity*.



lonely collaborator @LCollaborator

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Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai

Yes the discussion is just too situated to tweet in a meaningful way. #diacamp

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lonely collaborator @LCollaborator

Ah the limits of Twitter—the microblogging genre. #diacamp

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Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai

Well the discussion is tough enough to follow—live! Good but convoluted. #diacamp

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lonely collaborator @LCollaborator

Wish I were there. Will catch you later, when you're back tweeting. #diacamp

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Thanks for following #diacamp

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lonely collaborator @LCollaborator

:) #diacamp

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8s

Shadworth Dyson:

Yes, well, it’s worth bearing in mind that a definition of dialogue is ‘double speak’,⁴⁹ which is *precisely* what you’re observing Clark. It seems this brief lesson in utterance literacy is already proving beneficial.

Clark Chris:

And surprise, surprise—the ambiguity of Feldmann’s utterances is *another* reciprocal relation.

David Rooksby:

Ding ding.

Clark Chris:

They’re critical on the one hand and humourous on the other, undercutting or contesting each other—*just enough* to ensure that no single one dominates.

Shadworth Dyson:

Yes, I would agree, and perhaps this would be a good time to share your list of reciprocities, David, as we draw this barcamp contribution to a close.

David Rooksby:

You bet. They may not all be perfect examples, but I’ve got reciprocity between: question and response, language and society, individual and collective, *langue* and *parole*, image and text, verbal and nonverbal, primary and secondary utterances, figure and ground, black and white, English and German, artist and curator, self and other, primary and secondary interlocutors, content and form [as in the case of intonation,] ‘the said’ and ‘the unsaid’—I think, though this wasn’t totally clear—between the utterance and its spatiotemporal horizon, addressivity and answerability, the repeatable aspect of the utterance and its unrepeatable and context-specific aspect, and between the points of view or voices in dialogue like what you were saying about ‘double speak’.

KK Lin:

Um, okay, I’m just wondering: Does this mean *reciprocity* as a *social relation* is *actually* the medium of dialogic art? You know, Krauss quotes Walter Benjamin’s preoccupation with the medium of photography in her analysis of the medium more generally, and says he’s concerned with photography’s capacity to render the human subject as *woven* within a *network of social relations*.⁵⁰ Maybe I’m mistaken but this seems very similar to how the reciprocal relations on David’s list put interlocutors and their interlocution *in relation*.

Shadworth Dyson:

Very good, KK, that’s quite intriguing, as Bakhtin speaks, for instance, of genre being a means through which an interlocutor can *orient* himself in social intercourse, with genre *structuring* their approach to communication.

David Rooksby:

Is this medium-form-genre stuff really that tricky? I mean, think about it in relation to painting. Dialogue is the *form*, the painting in its entirety. Language is the *medium*—it’s like the paint on a canvas as well as the canvas itself.

KK Lin:

So the material support?

David Rooksby:

Something like that. The utterances are like *brush strokes*. They build up the artwork, give it mass. There’s technique here. And you have to learn technique. So there’s a kind of literacy involved.

Shadworth Dyson:

Actually, that’s a *surprisingly* good analogy, David. However, I’m uncertain it works in all respects. I would be more prone to speak, for instance, of utterances as closer to *material* than *technique*, but then again, there is no such thing as a ‘raw utterance’—at least, not in the same way there are ‘raw materials’—because utterances are always saturated with the histories of

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their prior use. *Genre* is indubitably technique. One has to gain familiarity with a genre to press it into service—effectively. We observe this in the women’s responses in *Take Care of Yourself*, which deploy a wide range of genres. You’ll recall the clown and—

Allison Jones: Shadworth, I’m afraid we’re already well and truly overtime.

Shadworth Dyson: That being the case, let me conclude by saying that, in my tutorial, I have been concerned with sketching an utterance literacy and proposing it as a skill set for identifying and working with the utterance as the *building block* of dialogue, this being the form of communication that is *explicitly* taken up and explored in dialogic art. Behind all the reciprocities identified in *Interview*, there is an overarching insistence on the extent to which dialogic art is drenched in what Allison earlier termed ‘the dialogueness of dialogues’, which she defined as ‘the interplay of dialogue’s *social* and *material qualities* that have made it such an enduring form of intersubjective exchange’.

David Rooksby: Ding ding. There’s another reciprocal relation for the list—between dialogue’s social and material aspects.

Shadworth Dyson: And, had we more time, we should explore this in greater depth. We’ve really only scratched the surface of ‘utterance literacy’. Nonetheless, I hope that our brief lesson has demonstrated how it is that a dialogic artwork like *Interview* has a more dialogic form than, for instance, *Chantier Barbès-Rochechouart*. *Interview* put in dialogue a range of entities, each tethered to a specific instance of intersubjective exchange, between Feldmann, Obrist and us.

I hope also this lesson has established the utterance as the *actual* *workhorse* of dialogic art, and hence also established its merit for serious and ongoing discussion. It is, perhaps, most to do with the *reciprocity* at stake in the utterance that we find the most purchase when it comes to grasping both the empirical and theoretical dimensions of dialogue through which dialogic art can be progressed. I would suggest that, in future, this art practice turns its attention to not only *demonstrating* ‘utterance literacy’ but also developing ways of *teaching it*. In so doing, the literacy at stake in the accomplishment of dialogic art might also provide cues for its reception and interpretation. Central to—

[The fire alarm sounds]

David Rooksby: Well that’s a wrap.

Marsha Bradfield: Thank you Shadworth. I’m afraid we’ll have to leave immediately. If you all would like to get your things, we’ll meet downstairs and make our way to the pub for a quick lunch. Allie would you stop the recorder, please?

¹Noam Chomsky, *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1965), 3.

²Noël Carroll, ‘Art and the Domain of the Aesthetic’, *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 40, no. 2 (2000): 199.

³Gary Iseminger, ‘Aesthetic Experience’, in *The Oxford Handbook of Aesthetics*, ed. Jerrold Levinson (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 99–116. See this discussion for a useful overview of philosophical debates *vis-à-vis* what constitutes aesthetic experience.

⁴Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice* (Stanford: Standford University Press, 1980), 66–67.

⁵Rosalind E. Krauss, ‘Reinventing the Medium’, *Critical Inquiry* 25, no 2 (Winter 1999): 294.

⁶Ibid., 290.

⁷Jeff Wall, “‘Marks of Indifference”: Aspects of Photography in, or as, Conceptual Art’, in *The Last Picture Show: Artists using Photography 1960–1982*, ed. Douglas Fogle (Minneapolis: Walker Art Center, 2005), 32–35.

⁸Ibid., 32.

⁹Ibid., 34–39. See also Krauss, ‘Reinventing the Medium’, 294.

¹⁰Krauss, ‘Reinventing the Medium’, 297–303. Krauss compares James Coleman’s use of photographic slides as a ‘support’ to Jeff Wall’s use of light boxes. Neither artist invented these media. Yet whereas, argues Krauss, Wall’s light boxes foreground their mediumistic significance, this doesn’t apply to Coleman’s use of slides, which seem more interested in destabilizing their mediumistic associations and expanding their possibilities. This leads Krauss to suggest that inventing a medium that mines the conventions of the artwork indicates an affirmation of the significance of this support in Coleman’s practice. To this end, Coleman’s practice is more mediumistic than Wall’s.

Our barcamp discussion circled around the possibility of dialogic art inventing a medium, though with the hindsight of reading this transcript, genre seems more pivotal to this practice than medium does. Genre assumes here a status not unlike the one that medium once enjoyed in art more generally: a material support replete with its own traditions and associations. Genre, as Dyson acknowledged in his contribution, is a social process. Implicit in his thinking is the idea that genres must reach critical mass to have currency. Horror movies are genres because enough of them have been made and identified as such, resulting in specific expectations of their production and consumption.

¹¹Daniel Chandler, ‘An Introduction to Genre Theory’, Aberystwyth University, 1997 users.aber.ac.uk/dgc/Documents/intgenre/chandler_genre_theory.pdf (accessed June 10, 2010).

¹²Ibid. Chandler, in his literature review of genre theory, notes that Steve Neale argues that genres are less systems than they are processes of systematization. This emphasis on process aims to acknowledge that, despite enjoying some degree of continuity, genres are subject to negotiation and change. Following Nicholas Abercrombie, Chandler goes on to say that, in the case of television, genres develop in the quest for new audiences. This, however, is only one reason for their development.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴M. M. Bakhtin and P. N. Medvedev, *The Formal Method in Literary Scholarship, A Critical Introduction to Sociological Poetics*, (London: John Hopkins University Press, 1978), 133–134.

¹⁵M. M. Bakhtin, *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*, eds. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990), 78.

¹⁶Bakthin and Medvedev, *The Formal Method*, 133.

¹⁷Chandler, ‘An Introduction to Genre Theory’.

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Jacques Derrida, as quoted in Ibid., ‘An Introduction to Genre Theory’.

²⁰Robert Hodge and Gunther Kress as quoted in Ibid., (accessed June 10, 2011).

²¹Bakhtin, *Speech Genres*, 68.

²²Valentin Voloshinov Nikolaevich, *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language* (London: Seminar Press, 1973). Debate over the author of this text persists. Although publisher attributes this text to Valentin Voloshinov Nikolaevich, who was a member of the Bakhtin Circle in Nevel in 1918, I am of the belief that Bakhtin authored this text, and hence my attribution in the barcamp.

²³Ibid., 48.

²⁴Ibid., 78.

²⁵Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, ed. Charles Bally and Albert Sechehayé (La Salle, Illinois: Open Court, 1983).

²⁶M. M. Bakhtin, *Problems with Dostoevsky’s Poetics* (London: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), 202.

²⁷Bakhtin, *Problems*, 202.

²⁸See for example, Hans Ulrich Obirst, *Interviews*, vol. 1, ed. Thomas Boutoux. (Florence : Fondazione Pitti Immagine Discovery Milan, 2003).

²⁹Bakhtin, *Speech Genres*, 72.

³⁰Ibid., 62.

³¹Michael Holquist, *Dialogism: Bakhtin and his World* (London: Routledge, 1990), 22.

³²Roland Barthes, *The Rustle of Language* (Berkley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1989), 63.

³³Ibid,, 62.

³⁴Ibid., 64.

³⁵Tino Sehgal, *Tino Sehgal*, January 17–March 3, 2005, The Institute of Contemporary Art, London, UK.

³⁶Holquist, *Dialogism*, 21.

³⁷Bakhtin, *Problems*, 88.

³⁸Ibid.

³⁹Bakhtin, *Problems*, 202.

⁴⁰Bakhtin, *Speech Genres*, 78.

⁴¹‘Hans-Peter Feldmann at the Guggenheim’ (press release), *Contemporary Art Daily: A Daily Journal of International Exhibitions* (September 10, 2011). <http://www.contemporaryartdaily.com/2011/09/hans-peter-feldmann-at-the-guggenheim/> (accessed March 10, 2012).

⁴²Tzvetan Todorov, *Mikhail Bakhtin: The Dialogic Principle* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984), 41.

⁴³Bakhtin and Medvedev, *The Formal Method*, 120.

⁴⁴Anne Shukman, ed., *Bakhtin School Papers* (Oxford: RPT Publications, 1983), 123–25.

⁴⁵Ibid., 127.

⁴⁶Bakhtin, *Speech Genres*, 86.

⁴⁷Voloshinov, *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*, 70.

⁴⁸Tom Cohen, ‘The Ideology of Dialogue: The Bakhtin/De Man (Dis)Connection,’ *Cultural Critique*, no. 33 (Spring 1996): 41–86. For a critical engagement with Bakhtin’s theory of dialogue as ‘double speak’, see page 44 for Cohen’s argument that, instead of embracing Bakhtin’s theory of dialogue as ‘hermeneutic exchange or communication, Bakhtinian “dialogue” maybe read as a wildly antagonistic scene of power, positioning, seduction’.

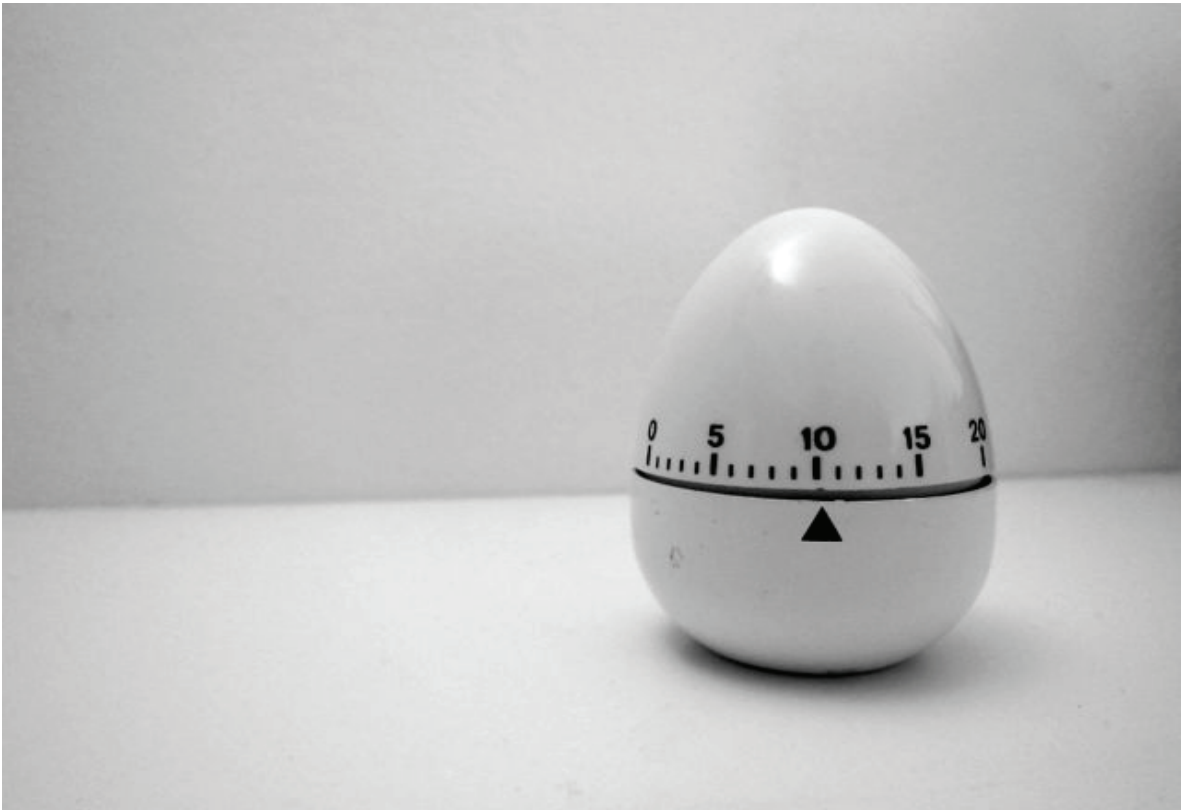
⁴⁹Krauss, ‘Reinventing the Medium’, 291.

⁵⁰Bakhtin, *Speech Genres*, 68.



LUNCH

15:04





Duchamp's Sister

CassyAppadurai

Dynamic discussion over lunch. #diacamp

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6s



Fig. 7.0

Marsha Bradfield: Allison, we’re recording?

Allison Jones: We are.

Marsha Bradfield: Thanks. Welcome back, everyone. I hope you enjoyed lunch, and it gave you a chance to reflect on this morning’s barcamp contributions as well as anticipate this afternoon’s. There seemed to be some intense exchange happening at the other end of the table. I heard snippets about human and non-human actors and something about tradition and technology being authors of dialogic art. I’d like to keep this debate going.

That said, there *are* time constraints to consider. We need to vacate the space by 7:30, as there is another group arriving at 8:00. I know that some of you have family and other obligations this evening, and will have to leave at around 6:00. Please be sure to give your guideline to John, me or someone else before you go, so we can incorporate your recommendation into our final session. Some of us have decided to go for dinner afterward, if you fancy debriefing over some food.

So we’ll have seven sessions this afternoon instead of five, which means that everyone will have a maximum of thirty minutes instead of forty. Recalling Shadworth’s contribution, this compression strikes me as a clear example of utterances *internalising* the terms and conditions of their spatiotemporal horizon, only to constitute this horizon in turn!

So for better or for worse, I’ll be relying on a timer going forward. Apologies to those of you who prepared longer contributions and have had to rejig in response to circumstance. I should have flagged this as a possibility in



Hillary Murphy:

advance; every barcamp I’ve ever attended has gone overtime. Without further ado, I’ll turn over to Hillary. That’s terrific, Marsha, thanks. Top marks on the day so far. By way of a personal introduction, I work with BA and MA students in what has come to be called ‘informal education’. We can understand this as learning what goes on in everyday life—*beyond the classroom*.¹ I would think that all of us here today recognise the wealth of learning that occurs as we interact with each other informally, and that with that recognition our whole conception of teaching and learning begins to change. We start appreciating that some of our most important education occurs on the fringes of curricula as learners put their learning into practice. This can occur anywhere—late at night in the studio, on the way to lectures, even in the pub. At one level, this learning supplements and supports formal education, right? But it also, and importantly, lays the foundation for life-long learning with a peer group. So you see, for me it’s a real treat to be engaged in this barcamp’s peer-to-peer exchange, a nice change from *educating* students about the value of this kind of interaction for their practice and a chance to focus on my *own* practice. So it’s great to be here as both a learner and a teacher.

Over lunch, I chatted to John about my intuition that informal education shares with dialogic art an appreciation for its core activity in an *expanded* sense. So what do I mean by this? There are actually three characteristics of informal education that I wish to highlight. They include that: it works through and is driven by conversation, to which I would add dialogue; it’s often spontaneous and involves exploring and enlarging experience; and it can take place in any setting.² Understood? I sense these things are also true for dialogic art—its commitment to *expanding* or *enlarging* our sense of dialogue as an artistic practice, whilst at the same time recognising the crucial role that it plays in art practice more generally. So you see, I’m struck by the preoccupation, in this art, with dialogue *across* art practice, in the artwork and the reception and interpretation of both.

Now, it was decided over the lunch that *John* would kick off the after-lunch review with a few select reflections on this morning, based on some of the questions he has collected so far.

David Rooksby:

Why John and not Cassy, our illustrious and eminently qualifed barcamp reporter?

Cassy Appadurai:

Because I can’t report back to the barcamp and tweet at the same time.

John Johnson:

And I want to prime your thinking in advance of our final session, where we’ll author some guidelines for dialogic art.

Hillary Murphy:

And I would like to thank John in advance for his help with this—Cassy, too. Marsha, you mentioned a timer? Why not set it for ten minutes. We’ll spend the final fifteen or so talking about dialogic epistemology. John, shall we?

[The timer is set.]

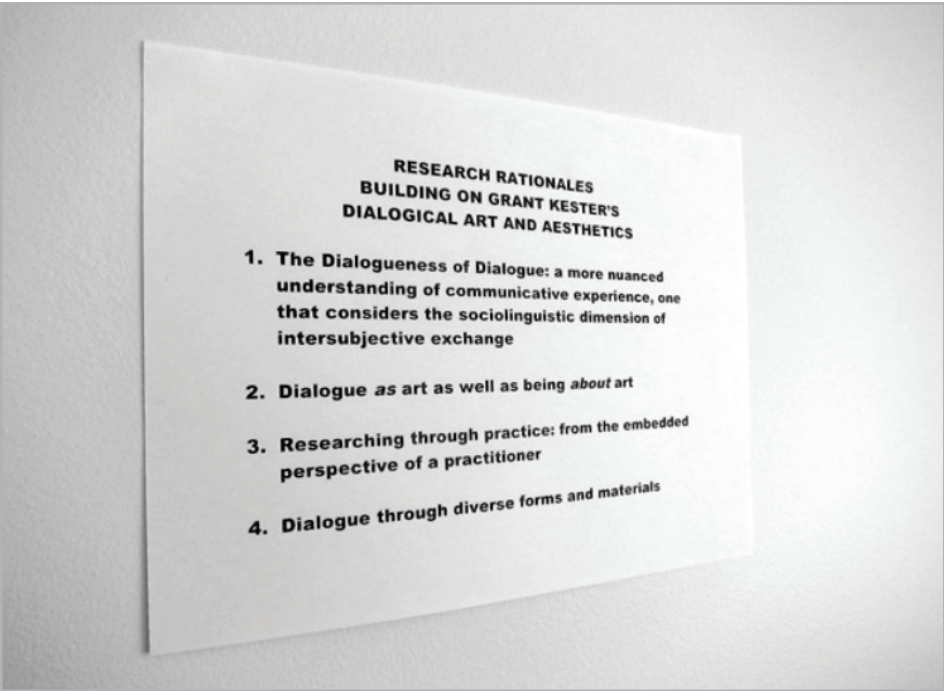


Fig. 7.2

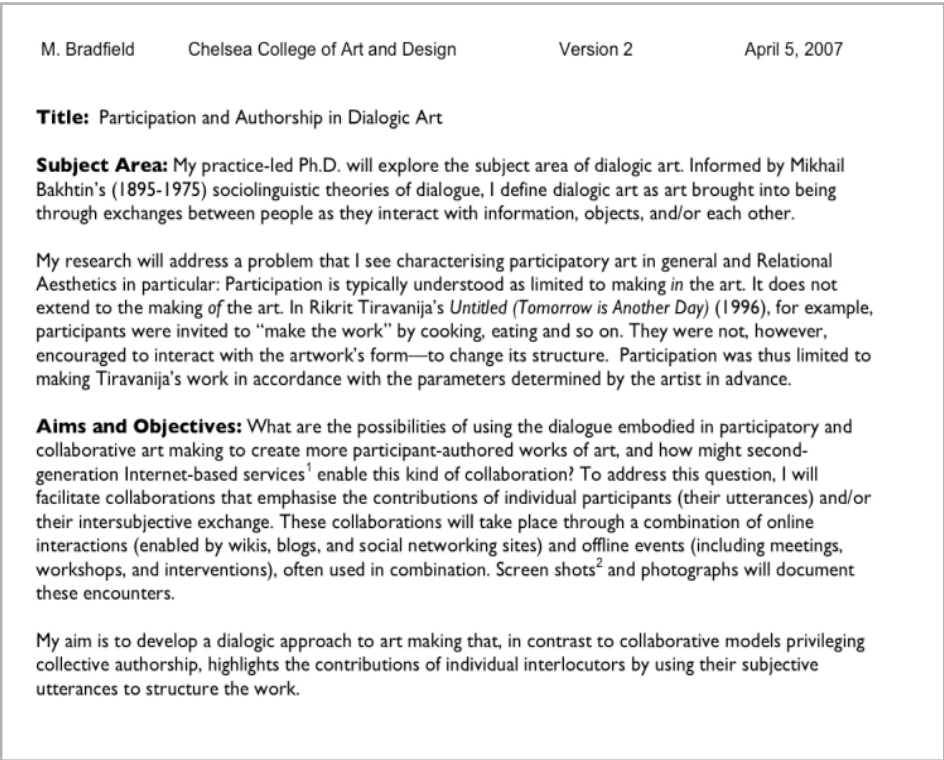


Fig. 7.3

John Johnson: Okay, right, thanks very much, Hillary. So, Allison and Marsha launched the barcamp with what they called a ‘welcome address’, though, truth be told, it seemed closer to an introduction designed to acquaint us with their preliminary research on dialogic art. They shared their sense that this type of art ‘explores intersubjective exchange as people interact with objects, networks, information and/or each other to produce dialogic works of art’. And what emerged over the course of the morning—especially in KK’s talk—was an interest in dialogue as *intersubjective exchange* rather than, for instance—and I’m making up an example here—automated communication between two computers. The onus, then, is on exchange between unmerged *consciousnesses*. I should also mention that Allison identified several rationales for Marsha’s and her research in the so-called welcome address, which are posted on the wall. (Fig. 7.1)

Okay, look, there was something else I wished to flag, something we didn’t explicitly discuss and that struck me as an oversight. Marsha, would you bring up the slide of your RF3?

Marsha Bradfield: Of course, but why? (Fig. 7.2)

John Johnson: Because I have a question. You’ll note that *right* at the bottom there’s a statement to the effect that you, Marsha, are interested in developing an approach to art making that, ‘in contrast to collaborative models privileging collective authorship, highlights the contributions of individual interlocutors by using their subjective utterances to structure the work’. And for me this flags the *composition* of dialogic works of art, which is something that has surfaced several times today and which I hope we’ll be able to explore further going forward. So to put this as a three-fold and general question, ‘What is dialogic art composed of?’

Shadworth Dyson: *Utterances!*

John Johnson: Alright and then the second part of my question is, ‘How is it composed?’

Shadworth Dyson: Through *dialogues*, surely!

John Johnson: And, ‘To what ends?’ Hopefully this is something that Hillary is going to be able to help us with when she explores dialogic epistemology.

Okay, so our second contribution was delivered PechaKucha style. You’ll recall that Clark, first thing this morning, declared that for him, dialogic art was really about labour—about acknowledging all the *work* that goes into making art happen.

Maeve Cutty: I expected Clark might speak about invisible, feminised or other kinds of labour that are vital to artistic authorship but often go unrecognised.³

John Johnson: Okay, but *his* contribution took a different tack. After defining dialogue as a ‘form of communication that alternates between two or more interlocutors . . . whose expressions issue across from and perhaps in opposition to each other as the interlocutors converse’, he went on to reify—to *personify*—‘the dialogic’ as a kind of interlocutor in dialogue with dialogue. For me, this raised an interesting question about where dialogue occurs and between what or whom?



KK Lin:

John Johnson:

KK Lin:

John Johnson:

Okay, later in Clark’s contribution, following a *ripping* discussion about the relation between his verbal and visual utterances—the commentary and the slides—Allison made a distinction between ‘dialogic’ and ‘dialectic’. And Shadworth expressed his view—Bakhtin’s view, actually—that, although propelled by higher-order synthesis, dialectic argumentation is *still* dialogic. So I guess I’m *still* a little confused about where this leaves dialogic art. I’m assuming the goal of this type of art is to draw out the dialogic dimension of its subjects and forms by deploying dialogic *strategies* and dialogic *tactics* to find ways of highlighting and representing their *existence* as dialogic. Assuming this is indeed the *purpose* of dialogic art—or at least one of its express concerns—Clark’s analytical categories would be useful to this project. To refresh your memory, these categories include ‘the dialogic’, manifesting in the ‘dialogic bonus’, ‘dialogic disposition’, and ‘dialogic strategy’ and underpinned by ‘dialogic tactics’.

Immediately following Clark’s non-narrative fable, KK based her contribution on a specific example. So yes, with reference to *Chantier Barbès-Rochechouart*, we looked at spatiotemporal dialogues, which opened a discussion about the relation between *literal* dialogues and *figurative* ones in dialogic art. And I believe we reached broad agreement that, without taking as its referent a *real-world instance* of intersubjective exchange, Huyghe’s *Chantier Barbès-Rochechouart* failed to qualify as a dialogic work of art. Well actually, um, John, I believe *you* advanced this view. You’ll recall that Cassy noted that we might actually think about dialogic ‘arts,’ in the *plural*, with each ‘art’ each being anchored in different types of dialogue? Fair enough. But actually, I was picking up on Marsha and Allison’s preoccupation with dialogue as *intersubjective exchange*, with this being a pivot for dialogic art. But you’re right to say this is only *one* possible pivot. What’s crucial, however, is that there’s some—well, *pivot*. Agreed? Okay. Now KK’s contribution also drew interesting queries related to reflexivity, and especially how it might enable dialogic artworks to bend back on themselves in ways that evoke a wider range of dialogues, beyond those the artwork might realistically contain. We also surfaced what Cassy dubbed ‘the ethics of opacity’—the challenge of reconciling dialogic art’s commitment to representing a range of authorial contributions on the one hand whilst, on the other, making no pretense to this being an accurate representation.

I’m not sure that ‘accurate’ is quite the right word, is it John? It’s really about, well, um, not taking this art on ‘face value’ would be better—does that make sense? The challenge is that dialogic art might honour the contributions of diverse interlocutors in the dialogues composing the artwork and/or practice, without making truth claims about it being a *literal* representation of some kind. I think. Or does that sound wrong?

No, no, KK, quite right, point taken. And actually, in a way, this introduces a central concern in Ella’s contribution, which explored the question, ‘What does it mean to *collaborate* in dialogic art?’ Ella seemed primarily concerned

Cassy Appadurai:
John Johnson:

with the *challenges* of making the *socially produced character* of artistic practice *explicit* in the artwork as an outcome. And when we looked at the example of Sophie Calle’s *Take Care of Yourself*, we wondered about the terms and conditions at stake in this artwork’s mimetic scheme. What was included? What was excluded? Who made the decisions? And what implications did this have for our interpretation?

Ella’s contribution also raised fascinating questions about subjectivity—in fact, *subjectivities* in the plural, including the ‘individual’ and ‘collective’ subjectivities produced through dialogic art as an explicitly and self-consciously collaborative approach. This discussion culminated in Cassy’s concerns that we may be diluting our discussion of dialogic art by spreading it too thin in an attempt to accommodate more and more considerations—*more* interlocutors, *more* ways of working together, *more* dialogues. And I liked the way that Cassy expressed this.

You did? You know it all seems so long ago that I’ve forgotten!
Okay, allow me to refresh your memory. You spoke about this inclusion being the *inverse* of earlier concerns about dialogic art running the risk of infinite regress, because adding more and more complexity runs the risk of *infinite progress*. This brought us back to a concern that was salient throughout most of the contributions: How do we *bound* dialogic art? What counts as a dialogic artwork? What counts as the practice of dialogic art and what doesn’t? And, look, to my mind, these questions remain very much outstanding as we go into the afternoon’s contributions.

Okay, moving on. Brian’s contribution surveyed the commentary on *relational* art, more broadly. But he zoomed in on agonism and conviviality in the practice of relational art and the ways in which agonism, in particular, is shaping commentary on relational art through *its content* and *form*. This led him to suggest that what is *immanent* to the practice of relational art has become *immanent* to its commentary, as well, right? And this in turn led to a question about whether this commentary is, then, an extension of relational art practice, as Brian seemed to suggest, and, if so, where does one end and the other begin?

David Rooksby:
John Johnson:

Well, surely it’s a reciprocal relation! Ding ding.
Thank you for that segue, David. ‘Reciprocal relation’ seems to have, become, well, a kind of refrain in our discussion, a central organising principle for dialogic art, if you will. Consider the list of reciprocal relations David compiled coming out of Shadworth’s contribution alone—

[The timer rings.]

Okay, to wrap up very quickly and before we were interrupted by the fire alarm, Shadworth offered us a lesson in utterance literacy informed by Bakhtin’s meta-linguistics. For me, this was another challenging contribution in that it coughed up a huge range of disparate and often complex and technical concerns, many of which we were simply unable to address. We never did get back to KK’s question about the auto-critique of dialogue—or



Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai

HM: Aims to explore dialogic epistemology as basis for DA.
#diacamp

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other kinds of critique—in dialogic art, and nor were we able to resolve what constitutes the *medium, form* or *genre*.

Shadworth challenged us to think about dialogue in terms of *utterances, interlocutors* and *exchange* in an expanded sense. The red thread seemed to be *addressivity*. In addition to utterances being addressed to interlocutors, we also considered the ways in which they’re addressed to their *themes*. Okay, now this culminated in two quite distinct readings of *Interview*. KK broached this from a formal perspective and Tina from a more sociological one, but both considered *Interview* as an utterance *composed* of utterances and interpreted the range of meanings it prompted as pointing to ‘the whole’ in a dialogic artwork being greater than the sum of its parts. And this idea of a loose synthesis—an organic or non-systematic coming together—is something else that we’ve been circling around in our discussion.

A core question raised by Shadworth’s contribution, and for me the central one, goes back to this ongoing issue of *scope*: if everything is in dialogue, then doesn’t a dialogic perspective end up being limited?

Shadworth Dyson: Not at all, so long as—

John Johnson: Okay, look, I suppose what I’m saying is that when dialogue becomes a theory of everything, it is reduced to a theory of nothing—

Hillary Murphy: And I would think that’s a good place to leave our after-lunch review. John, that was excellent, gold star, thank you very much. Marsha, would you reset the timer, please, for fifteen minutes from now?

[The timer is reset.]

Very good, off we go! For my part, I want to offer several reflections on dialogic epistemology as prompts for discussion. These stem from my intuition that this theory of knowledge might ground the practice-based research of dialogic art.

Cassy Appadurai: A point of clarification: I may be preempting your contribution, Hillary, but how are you defining ‘dialogic epistemology’?


Hillary Murphy: Very good question, Cassy. The answer is that I’m not. Or rather, I’m hoping we might establish this through our discussion. I guess I’m interested in how dialogic art might be employed to explore the production of knowledge and—

Allison Jones: And this is, of course, crucial from the perspective of our investigation as research.

Hillary Murphy: I would think it’s worth acknowledging that, for those who are outside the culture of art research in the UK, either because they’re embedded in alternative research cultures or different contexts, the idea of ‘art research’ generating ‘new knowledge’ may seem surprising. We may well ask, ‘Why think about art as though it were *science*?’⁴ Some would say that scientific research produces ‘knowledge’, whilst the arts and humanities produce something else—‘meaning’, perhaps.⁵ But you see, pitting objectivist connotations of ‘knowledge’ against subjectivist ones of ‘meaning’ can result in an unhelpful opposition⁶—it crushes scientific research on the one hand



Fig. 7.3




What is dialogic art @DialogicArt

Can art think? And does it need to think to know? #diacamp

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Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai

MB: Knowledge in the arts and humanities remains a moving target. #diacamp

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and arts and humanities research on the other into monolithic categories. This may suggest that art research is, well, plastic whilst the terms of knowledge in scientific research are essentially *fixed*.

Phil Hind: That's reductive.

Hillary Murphy: Agreed, Phil. So what is the alternative? I would say that one way of bridging this opposition may be to adopt 'ways of knowing' instead of 'new knowledge' as the touchstone of research in general—art research, at a minimum. (Fig. 7.3) You see, the present participle 'knowing' implies an ongoing process. This is closer to a *practice* of knowing as exploration than it is to 'knowledge' as a compact and static noun.⁷ And if we embrace knowledge as a process of 'doing' or 'undoing' rather than 'having'—or perhaps, in addition to—a plural conception begins to take shape. Understood?

John Johnson: Okay, but, look—reading between the lines, it sounds as if you don't think dialogic art as practice-based research generates *knowledge*.

Hillary Murphy: Very good point, John. When I mentioned to Marsha my interest in discussing dialogic epistemology, she encouraged me to locate this in relation to ongoing debate about knowledge in practice-based art research. I should say this isn't an area with which I'm really familiar. As an educator, my interest in dialogic epistemology differs from that of an art researcher. So you see, it's not so important for me to know *how* this epistemology defines knowledge. I mean, of course it's important. But what is really at stake in my own practice is the kind of learning opportunities it enables—the ways in which dialogic epistemology might *host* and *support* informal education via peer-to-peer exchange, in particular.


Allison Jones: Well, discussing the epistemic basis of art research, along with this ontological and methodological significance, is paramount not only for our immediate investigation into dialogic art, but more generally, in terms of the relation between art research and other types, most immediately academic research.⁸

John Johnson: Okay, as the researcher on this project, Allison, what position do *you* take on dialogic art as an enterprise focused on knowledge-acquisition?

Allison Jones: *Dialogic art*? Well, I don't, actually, because the claim to new knowledge in *my* research will likely reside in the ways in which the evaluative framework I am evolving for dialogic art expands on pre-existing ones, including Kester's approach, which I described earlier today when I established our research rationales.

John Johnson: Marsha?

Marsha Bradfield: Well, to reiterate what Hillary was saying, the status and significance of knowledge in art research—in fact, in the arts and humanities more generally—remains very much unresolved. It's a kind of moving target. After surveying some of the literatures on art research, I've opted for a provisional position that's close to home. In the perspective of my supervisor, Stephen Scrivener, art practice needs to be recognised in its own right as a form of research.⁹



Duchamp's Sister

by CassyAppadurai

MB: Artworks generate knowledge by creating apprehensions.

#diacamp

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David Roosky:

That’s convenient, isn’t it—falling in line with your supervisor?

Marsha Bradfield:

Well, yes and no. Is it any wonder that all of my supervisors—Stephen, Neil Cummings and Mary Anne Francis—have influenced my thinking and practice? And my cohorts too? We’ve been in dialogue for over half a decade about dialogic art. That said, the challenge is, of course, to critically *integrate* these influences into my practice. And with this in mind, I’ll try to express the following as briefly as I can.

David Roosky:

Meaning?

Marsha Bradfield:

Well, I mean, this is complex but I sense there are at least *three* options when it comes to thinking about knowledge in art research. First, we can take the view that art generates its *own* kind of knowledge. This being the case, we’d be stretching normative definitions of knowledge as, for instance, ‘true justified belief’.

Krista Wiseman:

Things like tacit or embodied knowledge come to mind.

Marsha Bradfield:

Right, with them being closer to a *practical* knowing than a *theoretical* one.¹⁰ But I suppose my concern with this view is that it might *other* art research from research practice and culture more generally. I’m not sure this is really what’s best for art research as a fledging field.

Alternatively, we might follow Hillary and take the view that art generates something *distinct* from knowledge—*meaning* perhaps. Though, as she’s said, this sets up an opposition between the sciences in the pursuit of ‘knowledge’ and the arts and humanities as searching for ‘meaning’.¹¹ Again, I’m not sure this split is necessary, let alone desirable. So more interesting, to my mind, is the possibility of art research approaching research from the perspective of extra-disciplinarity. And you’ll recall that Allison advanced this as a basis for art, in general, in our opening comments.

Now, Stephen—Scrivener, I mean—argues that, because art has not, historically, been concerned with the production of knowledge, it is difficult to see how it might adopt this teleology without compromising effect. You know it’s difficult, for instance, to settle into agreement about what an artwork *means* in the same way we might agree about the research outcomes of a medical trial. For Stephen—and I agree with him on this—what artworks generate is actually something closer to *calling into question* our assumptions about the way things are—how the world works. He terms this ‘creating apprehensions’. I can’t do justice to his whole argument here, but he comes to the conclusion that, in the case of making art, research can be defined as an *original* creation that is pursued in order to encourage *novel* apprehensions.¹²

David Roosky:

‘In the case of making art, research can be defined as an *original* creation that is pursued in order to encourage *novel* apprehensions’? Is that what you said?

Marsha Bradfield:

Yes, and I guess I’m interested in these apprehensions being a kind of *negation*—a negation like the type Allison earlier described with reference to art as extra-disciplinary. She spoke, for instance, about this art developing something like a *negative identity* by adopting and adapting the skills and resources of other fields to art’s own ends. The result being that, although

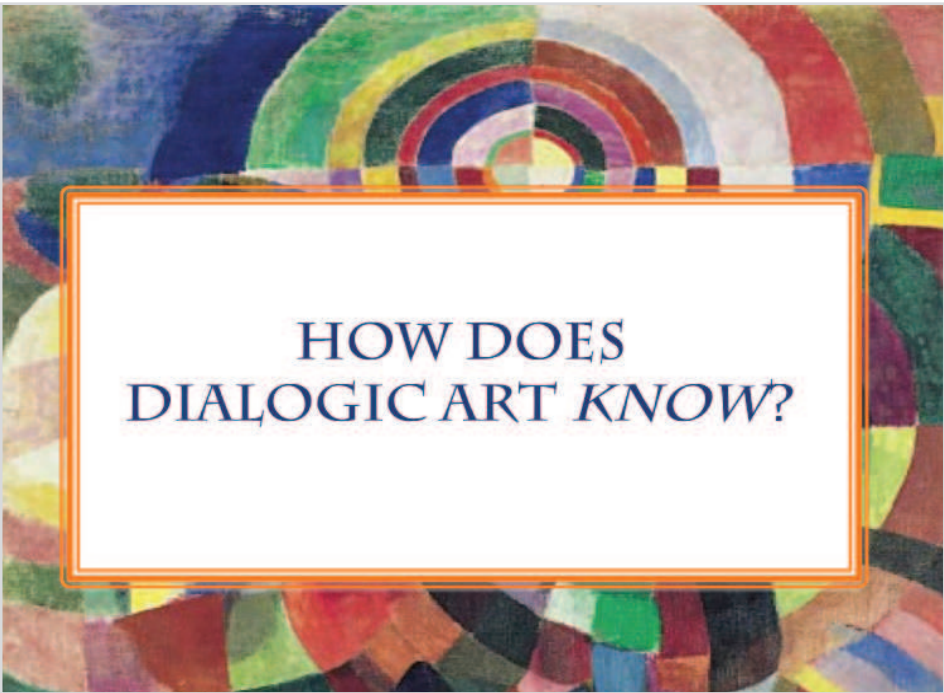


Fig. 7.4

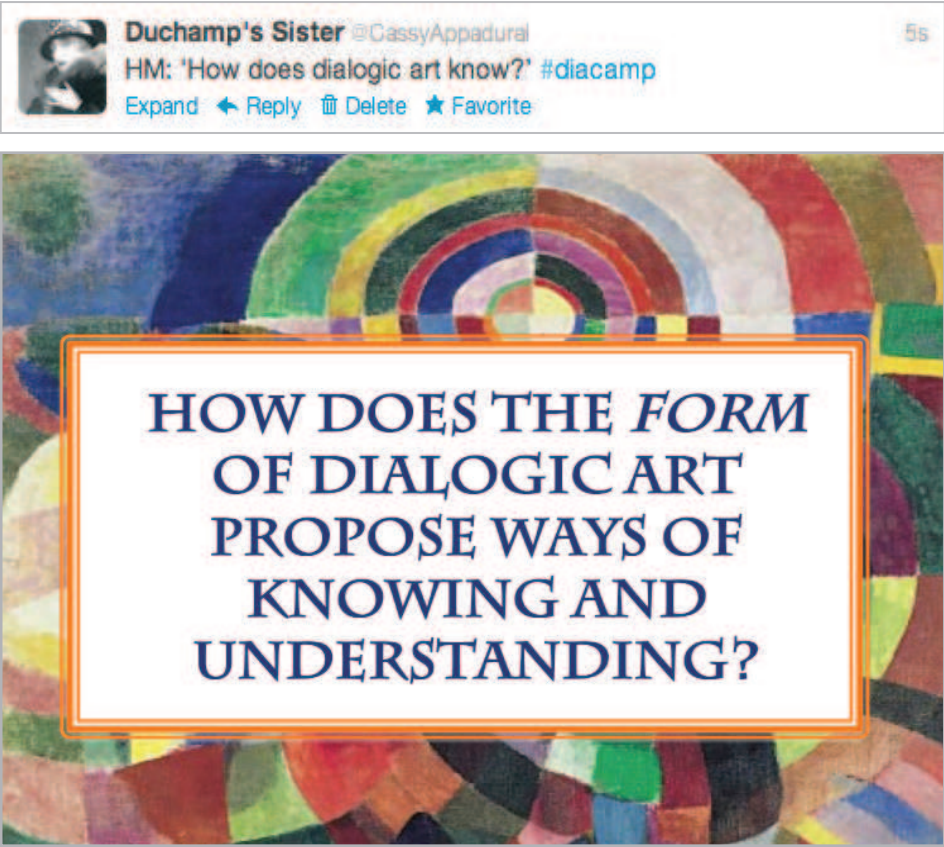


Fig. 7.5

art *draws* on sociology, literary theory, pedagogy and so on and so forth, it does not claim to be *doing* sociology, literary theory and pedagogy in the same way these fields do. So I'm interested in Stephen's argument as a kind of compliment to this, with art research raising apprehensions about *disciplinary norms* as well as *social norms* more generally, among other things. In the case of dialogic art, this would include how we conceptualise dialogue as a *social practice*. Listen, I feel as though I'm dominating Hillary's session, so perhaps—

John Johnson:

Okay, but, look, going back to Scrivener's position, couldn't we just as easily describe *everyday* art practice in these terms—as raising apprehensions?

Marsha Bradfield:

It's a fair point. Let me just say that Stephen's response hinges on *intention* and *convention*. Art researchers, in his view, are distinguished from artists in general by their *purposive* approach to *generating apprehensions* that are *culturally novel* through some form of *artistic production*. As part of a research community, art researchers approach this conventionally, in *compliance* with the norms through which research is realised.¹³

Krista Wiseman:

But it's *art* research! In keeping with the history of art as creative practice, shouldn't this research be *creative* as well?

Allison Jones:

Creativity is all well and good but when it comes to *art research*, this practice is distinguished by its ability to generate significance through the conventions of both research and art—so there is a *double* qualification at stake.

Hillary Murphy:

May I come in on this? It opens onto my next prompt, you see, and I'm conscious that the clock is ticking.

Marsha Bradfield:

Of course, Hillary.

Hillary Murphy:

Let's, for argument's sake, say that we accept Scrivener's position. In the case of dialogic art, its research status resides with the *apprehensions* it achieves. I would think these could well relate to calling into question the ways in which dialogue is conceived and functions in contemporary art. Is anyone in *radical* disagreement? No? Good, very good.

So you'll recall that my first prompt was about embracing 'knowing' as a *process* in art research whilst 'knowledge' is more of an *outcome*. With this in mind, what might *knowing* mean in dialogic art? Or how might this art be a process of *knowing*? So you see, what I'm really asking is 'How does dialogic art *know*?' (Fig. 7.4)

Cassy Appadurai:

'How does dialogic art know?' So we're back to *personifying* dialogue? As an inanimate object—even as a social practice—art can't know because it can't think. Or at least not the way that people do.

Hillary Murphy:

You're right, Cassy, but art can model ways of knowing. You see, some would argue that, when it comes to practice-based endeavors, we can distinguish between 'knowledge' and 'skill'. This has been thematised in debates in continental philosophy as the difference between 'knowing *that*' and 'knowing *how*'. We touched on this earlier, but a little repetition won't hurt. You see, 'knowing *that*' is wrapped up with more familiar notions of research, concerned with the convention of true justified belief and persuasive argumentation, whilst 'knowing *how*' is closer to practical knowledge, which



is largely tacit and embodied, making it resistant to discursive or conceptual expression.¹⁴ It’s my intuition that, when it comes to dialogic art, we’re really talking about ‘knowing *how*’ in contrast to ‘knowing *that*’. I would think we need to at least *try* to make explicit some of the distinguishing characteristics at stake in the *form* of this cultural production as a way of knowing—dialogic art’s tacit assumptions and theories-in-use—and to consider them in relation to dialogic epistemology, and vice versa. So the question is, ‘How does the form of dialogic art propose a way of knowing or understanding?’ (Fig. 7.5) Yes, quite. But let’s go back, for a moment, to Scrivener’s emphasis on ‘the artwork’ generating the apprehensions that distinguish art *research*—but what about the *practice*?

Phil Hind:

Marsha Bradfield:

Well, it’s true that Stephen—Scrivener—is concerned with contesting art objects as what he terms ‘knowledge artifacts’ that convey knowledge in a straightforward way. To give you an example, he compares and contrasts a functional Tube map with Simon Patterson’s *Great Bear*, where the names of celebrities take the place of stations and locations on the map. So it uses this association to propose another way of understanding both the Underground and the relations among these historical people. Anyway, my point is really that Stephen is more concerned with artifacts than with artistic practice—at least in his paper titled, ‘The art object does not embody a form of knowledge’.¹⁵

Phil Hind:

It’s quite an interesting point in the case of dialogic art, isn’t it. I’m not sure the practice and artwork can be teased *apart*—assuming, that is, we accept Ella’s contention that this art is distinguished in part by its social character being made manifest in the artwork as an outcome of this production.

Cassy Appadurai:


I second Phil’s thinking. I was struck by the resistance in this morning’s discussion to drawing a nice, neat line between the practice of generating the artwork and the artwork as an outcome of this practice. So, right there, I think we’ve got something like an apprehension. It contests the notion of the artwork in dialogic art as an outcome that is largely discrete—or, at the very least, cleaved from the broader practice of dialogue through which it evolves.

Hillary Murphy:

There’s something in what you’re saying, Cassy, that makes me think of Kevin Barge and Martin Little’s argument about dialogue in organisational life. They discuss the tendency to see it as ‘abnormal’—an exceptional conversational episode rather than to the stuff of everyday exchange.¹⁶ They report that, in some organisational contexts, dialogue takes the form of special sessions facilitated by experts. An example might be, ‘On Friday, there will be a dialogue on appropriate email correspondence at work’. And they remark that this model has similarities with David Bohm’s approach.

John Johnson:

Okay, as in the case of his MIT Dialogue Project—I’m familiar with it. But what does this have to do with the relation between artworks as distinct from practice—or dialogic epistemology for that matter?



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Creating apprehensions changes how we see the world. #diacamp

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Hillary Murphy: Well, you see, we don’t have time to discuss the Dialogue Project at length. So let me just say that Bohmian dialogue is an *intentional act* occurring within a *dedicated space*, in which interlocutors meet together regularly to practice this skill. I’m not sure how many of you are familiar with Bohmian dialogue? Well, it assumes that by coming together and thinking together *repeatedly* [once or twice a week for months if not years] we might be able to draw out and expose our implicit assumptions through discursive exchange, thereby better grasping the *incoherence* of our thought.¹⁷

Shadworth Dyson: If I may interject, Hillary. Does this mean the connection here pertains to both the Bohmian approach and dialogic art as forms of research that is concerned with *creating apprehensions*? In Bohmian dialogue, wouldn’t interrogating our faulty thinking shift our worldview?

Hillary Murphy: I hadn’t thought about this, Shadworth, but it’s a very good point. Top marks! I was actually going to say that the emphasis on dialogue occurring in a discrete space on Friday afternoons between 2:00 and 4:00 o’clock among thirty kindred spirits, strikes me as related—at least, *structurally* akin—to Kester’s sense of dialogue as constitutive of dialogical works of art—with this dialogue occurring in the artworks in contrast to being in response to them. So you see, the emphasis is placed on dialogue being located in this *particular* space.

Barge and Little, on the other hand, advance a Bakhtinian approach to organisational life—dialogue as *everyday* interaction, including peer-to-peer exchange.¹⁸ What I’m trying to say—in what I would think is coming across as a very round-about way—is that *this* approach, this Bakhtinian approach, seems to me to be closer to the inclusive and holistic one that we seem to be favouring for dialogic art.

Allison Jones So it’s Bohm/dialogical art and Bakhtin/dialogic art? You appear, with this formulation, to be echoing the implicit critique that I made when outlining our research rationales—a critique, that is, of Kester’s expanded and yet *still* limited sense of dialogue in dialogical art. And here I’m thinking of his view that if, in the past, artworks have *prompted* dialogue about themselves and, by contrast, dialogical artworks are themselves composed of dialogue, why not, I would argue—well, why not also acknowledge the dialogues comprising the practice as constitutive of this authorial activity overall?

Brian Updike: Including its commentary.

John Johnson: Okay, I can see that. And yes, it could be that calling into question the taken-for-granted division between art practice and the artwork it generates result in an apprehension like the kind that Scriven—

Tina Wiseman: But isn’t there another apprehension at stake, or at least something *like* an apprehension? I’m thinking here that, in addition to an art practice producing artworks, it might also produce *authorial subjects*, *subjectivities* and—

John Johnson: Okay, I can see that too. But, look, I’m still wondering how—how does all this relate to *dialogic epistemology*?



Hillary Murphy: Well, you see, John, Barge and Little identify dialogue as a ‘relational practice’ through which people use language to connect with each other. This intersubjective exchange helps them to organise their experience and make it meaningful¹⁹ as they co-construct an understanding of the world.

John Johnson: Okay, so you’re talking about social constructivism.

Phil Hind: This makes good sense to me, John—assuming you’re referring to social constructivism as a theory of the social world, including knowledge, which develops between interlocutors.

David Rooksby: As opposed to—

Phil Hind: As opposed to cognition that evolves in the minds of individuals, which would make it something closer to subjective meaning. In other words, knowledge from the perspective of social constructivism isn’t something that exists out there on its own—like, for instance, the solar system as a factic phenomenon—any more than knowledge is something that resides entirely inside the minds of individuals. Rather, it is produced through intersubjective exchange in response to political, cultural, technological and other developments. When these changes are substantial enough, they make it necessary for us to rethink how we hold the world in common—as knowledge in common.²⁰

Hillary Murphy: Yes, very good—dialogic epistemology is a variation of social constructivism. Excellent response. This constructivist approach seems to me to be akin to the idea of ‘distributed authorship’ that has been circulating throughout our exchange. I think this could help to overcome essentialist notions of what the author or authorship is and—

Clark Chris: As well as what *dialogue* is! *Clearly*, dialogic art is a contemporary art practice that results in apprehension when it questions the form and function of dialogue in this type of cultural production—which is central to all its aspects!

John Johnson: Right, Clark. I can see this as a possibility. But, look, I’m concerned that, by embracing everything *as* dialogue or *in* dialogue, dialogic art succumbs to its own rote ontology, not unlike the ontology that plagues social constructivism.²¹ I’m thinking here of what results when the perspectives of those constructing ‘the social’ are ‘relative and never absolute’. I mean this sounds okay, right? What’s not okay about undermining meta-narratives as ‘Truth’ with a capital ‘T’? But, look, I have to admit that I agree with Michael Taussig’s observation that knowledge marked by relativism and responsiveness tends to result in a case of mistaken identity. And this occurs when we confuse the beginnings of knowledge—in this case, the *recognition* that things are constructed—for the end of knowledge. The problem, in other words, is that we fetishise this construction by seeing it as an end in itself, when we should be unpicking the *privileges* of construction.²²

Brian Updike: Absolutely. But doesn’t this point to the *importance* of social constructivism? So how certain constructions are advanced? And how this occurs through dialogues, including those that make up dialogic art? No, that’s not quite what I wish to say. Let me try again. Isn’t it less important that we decide whether



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@CassyAppadurai

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Dialogic epistemology would consider what dialogues dominate.
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Shadworth Dyson

@ShadworthDyson

now

But isn't this Foucault's project? His archeology of knowledge and discourse? #diacamp

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DA could raise apprehensions about the how dialogue constitutes contemporary art practice. #diacamp

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1m

HM: Points to role that constructive alignment might play in the coordinating the epistemology, ontology and teology of DA!
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Allison Jones:

Brian Updike:

David Rooksby:

Tina Wiseman:

Hillary Murphy:

Allison Jones:

Ella Stone:

Allison Jones:

[The timer sounds.]

Marsha Bradfield:

Hillary Murphy:

dialogic epistemology holds fast to dialogue as limited to a particular type of communicative exchange or embraces it in an expanded sense, than that we examine its effects on both the artwork and those involved in it? Do you follow? Doesn't the epistemology that informs dialogic art need to pay close attention to the dialogues that dominate its construction and maintenance, whether it's practice, artwork or reception? That's really what I'm trying to say.

Brian, approaching this from the perspective of research methodology, what consequences would it have with regards to pursuing the research?

No doubt the first move would be to establish what qualifies as dialogue in the practice of dialogic art.

Or how about *where* the dialogue occurs? Like you've said, its dialogic art's interest in the dialogues that spread across all its various parts that sets this art *apart*. And these include—what? The practice, the artwork, its reception and, uh, its discursive production, right? It's the same old story: what are the three key factors in the success of any business? Location, location and location. And then we're also talking about different types of dialogue: verbal, nonverbal, visual—

And there are dialogues among subjects—first- and second-order interlocutors—and the way each dialogue shapes all the different kinds of subjectivity.

In those terms, I would think of dialogic art as a kind of *dialogue of dialogues*, each one struggling with the others to produce significance in the same way that interlocutors contest each other's points of view—and build on—in dialogue—

This is really assuming that we privilege dialogue as agonistic.

Regardless—is it not more important that this exchange we're discussing finds form in the artwork?

Concomitantly, this *dialogue of dialogues* could raise apprehensions about the ways in which dialogue operates in dialogue-based practice, in particular, and contemporary art more generally. Critically however, this needs to be researched on a case-by-case basis, that is, in the case of each dialogic work of art evolving through practice and--

Hillary and John thank you. You've given us a lot to think about and—

If I may offer one more comment in closing. I would think that what this after-lunch review has established—or at least begun to establish—is a sense of dialogic art arising from the *constructive alignment* of its epistemology, ontology and teleology. You see, this art's dialogic theory of knowledge is aligned with its dialogic form—its way of *being* in the world and relating to it, as well as its *purpose*—which I hold is to better understand how it is that we co-construct the world through dialogue—*dialogues*, actually. Dialogue is, of course, the common denominator here, in this alignment. Dialogic art promotes dialogue as a form—a mode—of achieving novel insights via co-



constructed understanding arising through dialogic exchange. One important thing about this kind of alignment is that it can be used as a mechanism of coordination—in this case, a way of coordinating energies, actions and practices across these three areas into dialogic art as a shared enterprise.²³ So you see, we might think about these aspects as being *in dialogue* in dialogic art. That said, one of the trade-offs of coordinating a shared enterprise in this way is that it can become a kind of unquestioned alliance—dialogic art is all about dialogue. What this means, however, needs to be regularly reviewed and disturbed to avoid it becoming common sense and remains an ongoing process of discovery.²⁴ Listen, thank you all for taking up the discussion of dialogic epistemology with such enthusiasm.

Marsha Bradfield: And thank you too, Hillary. Will you all join me in giving her a round of applause?

[Barcamp claps.]

¹Tony Jess and Mark K. Smith, 'What is Informal Education?' infed: ideas, thinkers, practice, <http://www.infed.org/i-intro.htm> (accessed June 10, 2011).
²Ibid.
³For a discussion of current issues pertaining to feminised and/or invisible labour, with regards to art in particular, see *Labour 1* (2012) eds. Melissa Gordon and Marina Vishmidt (independent publication). Vishmidt's 'Working Artists in the Greater Economy' is a useful exposé of contemporary art as a 'speculative mode of production,' which is to say a mode that disavows its own character as labour.
⁴James Elkins, 'Afterward: On Beyond Research and New Knowledge' in *Thinking Through Art: Reflection on Art as Research*, ed. Katy Macleod, Lin Holdridge (London: Routledge, 2005), 241.
⁵Carolyn Birdsall, Maria Boletsi, Itay Sapir and Peiter Verstraete, Introduction to *Inside Knowledge: (Un)doing Ways of Knowledge in the Humanities*, ed. Carolyn Birdsall, Maria Boletsi, Itay Sapir and Peiter Verstraete (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009), 2.
⁶Elkins, 'Afterward', 241.
⁷Birdsall, Boletsi, Sapir and Verstraete, Introduction, 3.
⁸Henk Borgdorff, *The Debate on Research in the Arts* (Bergen: Bergen National Academy of the Arts, 2006), 16–17.
⁹Stephen Scrivener, 'The Art Object Does Not Embody a Form of Knowledge', *Working Papers in Art and Design 2* (2002) http://sitem.herts.ac.uk/artdes_research/papers/wpades/vol2/scrivener.html (accessed May 19, 2011).
¹⁰Borgdorff, *The Debate on Research in the Arts*, 19.
¹¹Birdsall, Boletsi, Sapir and Verstraete, 2.
¹²Scrivener, 'The Art Object Does Not Embody a Form of Knowledge.'
¹³Ibid.
¹⁴Borgdorff, *The Debate on Research in the Arts*, 19.
¹⁵Scrivener, 'The Art Object Does Not Embody a Form of Knowledge.'
¹⁶J. Kevin Barge and Martin Little, 'Dialogical Wisdom, Communicative Practice, and Organizational Life', *Communication Theory* 12, no.4 (November 2002), 378.
¹⁷David Bohm, *On Dialogue* (New York: Routledge, 1996). See in particular 'The Nature of Collective Thought', 55–70.
¹⁸Barge and Little, 'Dialogical Wisdom, Communicative Practice, and Organizational Life', 382.
¹⁹Ibid., 383.
²⁰Robert H. Jackson and Georg Sørensen, *Introduction to International Relations: Theories and Approaches* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 165.
²¹Jeffrey T. Nealon, *Alterity Politics: Ethics and Performative Subjectivity* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1998), 49.
²²As quoted in Ibid.

²³Etien Wenger, *Communities of Practice: Learning, Meaning and Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 179.

²⁴Ibid., 181.

15:38



Duchamp's Sister

@CassyAppadurai

23s

Back on line. KW to talk about 'affect' in her contribution, with is off the cuff #diacamp

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Fig. 8.0

- Marsha Bradfield:

You don't have any slides, do you Krista? I'll make one to introduce your contribution in the publication. (Fig. 8.0)
- Krista Wiseman:

That's great, thanks. *Sooo*—hello, everyone. I'm Krista Wiseman and Tina and Christian are my parents. I'm here because they asked me to drive. I was kvetching the other day that we never talk about our projects—we're all three artists—and they said, 'Oh, you should come to this barcamp. It's about dialogue so they *have* to talk to you'. I thought about this and it depressed me. What a sad thing to do, to come to a day on dialogue so people, including my parents, will talk to me about my art practice and theirs. I said, 'No'. And then Chris said, 'Fine, but can you still drive?'
- Marsha Bradfield:

Is it true that you used to be a comedian?
- Krista Wiseman:

Yes, but I wasn't a very good one. And I think a big part of what I do is trying to deal with this.
- Marsha Bradfield:

So now you're an artist?
- Krista Wiseman:

Artist, writer, curator, educator and activist. I'm just happy to have a job.
- Marsha Bradfield:

You get paid for your art?
- Krista Wiseman:

For driving my parents around.
- Marsha Bradfield:

So what do you think?
- Krista Wiseman:

About?
- Marsha Bradfield:

Dialogic art, solving for 'x'. 'Dialogic art is'—[fill in the blank].
- Krista Wiseman:

Well, I didn't prepare anything but I thought I'd talk about *affect*. I sense it has a lot in common with the 'dialogueness' of dialogic art. I feel as though I know what this is in the same way that I feel I know what affect is. I have many



Assume the Position @EllaandBrian1m

'and, and, and' = ref to Deleuze's 'AND'? = productive conjunction #diacamp

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TheJargonBuster @TheJargonBustel10s

Brian Massumi = theorist of affect, translated Lyotard, & Deleuze and Guattari. #diacamp

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TheJargonBuster @TheJargonBustelnow

Spinoza = 17th c. Jewish Dutch philosopher – gives 48 types of affect in his Ethics #diacamp

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Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai4s

KW defines affect following Massumi:affect is the ability to affect and be affected #diacamp

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Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurainow

KW:affects unites subject and object in the same event of becoming. #diacamp

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Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurainow

KW:affect is 'transition' in contrast to state or disposition; affect as a cusp, overlap threshold. #diacamp

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associations in both cases. But I’m still not really sure. Or rather, there’s much to understand, and I’m interested in the porousness of this understanding.

Marsha Bradfield: So tell us about the significance of affect for dialogic art.

Krista Wiseman: Well, first let me say that I’ve been trying to understand the *manyness* of affect’s forms.¹ It’s a complex concept and it’s used in diverse contexts. When it comes to art discourse, we hear about affect in discussions on self-organised art practice to new media platforms for interaction and labour—*labours*, actually, different *kinds* of work—and, *and, and, and*. And then again, there is something predictable about the way affect is rehearsed in some conversations on the fringes of what we’ve been calling ‘the dominant art world’. My thinking about affect and the language I use to speak about it has been forged through working in art as activism, *sooo*—socially engaged practice. When someone says ‘affect’ in this context, read: how bodies affect each other—bodies in productive relation.²

David Rooksby: Productive relation. Sounds mysterious—stimulating, even.

Krista Wiseman: That’s Brian Massumi’s influential definition, following Spinoza’s even more influential one. Massumi says that ‘affect is the ability to affect and be affected’.³

Maeve Cutty: Are you sure that even makes sense, luv?

David Rooksby: Sure it does—as ‘bodies in productive relation’.

Krista Wiseman: Right. Brilliant. It’s another reciprocal relationship—transference of some kind of feeling—if that’s what you’re getting at.


David Rooksby: Well, ding-a-ling.

Krista Wiseman: *Sooo*—Massumi goes on to say that what’s useful about this definition of affect is that it moves transversally across a stubborn division. This is the tendency to think ‘subject’ and ‘object’ as discrete categories of being. But then again, ‘affect’, understood as the ‘ability to affect and be affected’, unites them in the same event—an unfurling of an event that’s a becoming of subject and object *together*.⁴

David Rooksby: You’re saying that subjects and objects make each other—*affectively*?

Krista Wiseman: You look confused—or maybe intrigued? How to put it? It may help to say something about what affect is *not*. When Spinoza’s notion of affect is taken out of context, torn from his broader philosophy, it sometimes gets reduced to being something like a state of the body or a state of the mind, one that either enables or disables a body’s or mind’s ability to act.⁵ But the thing about this definition is that it locates affect in the body and mind without acknowledging that, in addition to acting, these things are *also* acted upon.

Then again, the word ‘state’ is interesting when it comes to affect, because ‘state’ can connote something stable or substantial, like a ‘nation state’, ‘state of the art’, ‘state of war’. But, following Massumi, we can also think of affect as a transition-like state between or across bodies—including subject and object. ‘Transition’ is something we’ve come close to today with talk of ‘thresholds’, ‘cusps’ and ‘overlaps’ in dialogic art. Shadworth spoke about the overlap between utterances as *rejoinders* in the chain of call and




TheJargonBuster @TheJargonBustel

3s

Liminal refers to a transition—something occupying two a position at or on both sides of a threshold. #diacamp

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Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai

now

KW:affect is like a nexus of relations between bodies. #diacamp

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What is dialogic art @DialogicArt

now

R all relations affective? 2 broad! Like everything being dialogue. It becomes a narrow view. #diacamp

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Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai

now

The causality resulting in affect isn't necessarily linear –more rhizomatic (?) #diacamp

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John Johnson:

Phil Hind:

Krista Wiseman:

Phil Hind:

Krista Wiseman:

Marsha Bradfield:

Krista Wiseman:

Allison Jones:

Krista Wiseman:

Allison Jones:

Shadworth Dyson:

David Rooksby:

[The barcamp laughs]

response as they absorb each other. *Sooo*—we’ve been circling around the *liminal* in dialogic art. And when it comes to what makes this art different, it’s the liminality of the dialogic—that’s the thing. It’s kind of like the *link* in our metaphorical chain, if you see what I mean—as a nexus of relations, a space of interrelation between *subject* and *object*, *self* and *other*—bodies as they *affect* and are *affected* by each other. So I want to think about the link between these bodies as a transition where affect occurs.

And between ‘minds’?

What about ‘entities’?

Right. Brilliant. ‘Entities’ is more inclusive. But it’s really the affect among bodies—among *embodied subjects*—that I’d like to bring into this discussion. Anyway, I think that affect as a transition-like state is conveyed in Massumi’s gloss as an ‘ability to affect and be affected’.⁶ And this gets us closer to Spinoza’s overarching interest in affect as arising from causal relations.⁷ Now, Phil you’re looking concerned, so let me say—

Oh, no! Not concerned. *Curious*, as ‘causal relations’ is a hot topic in sociology and it would be good to hear your views on this.

Well, I’m not really thinking about causality in a straightforward way, not something that’s easily reduced to stimulus and response, if that’s what you’re wondering about. Actually, that’s not *quite* right. I mean, affect is produced through stimulus and response, but this doesn’t always crystallise as a linear structure. How to put this? Massumi favours the word ‘priming’ to describe something like the causality that gives rise to affect.⁸ He likens this to ‘modulation’, and I take this to mean that affect is variable—unpredictable.⁹ It’s complex and can’t easily be reduced to a clear narrative of events. With so many subtle relations, it’s not always clear which is the stimulus and which the response. And this leads Massumi to describe affect as something like a *felt passage*, something that opens onto a *problematic field* instead of ending in a *particular solution*.¹⁰ For Massumi, it invites an ‘indefinitely constructive thinking of embodied, relational becoming’.¹¹ So affect is open—speculative, even. I think this kind of flexibility is something that dialogic art desires for itself but isn’t quite sure how to achieve.

What dialogic art *desires* for itself?

How to put this? It occurs to me that your research is quite—*thorough*.

As in *rigorous*?

I suppose so, but not in a good way, if you see what I mean.

No, frankly. I don’t. What’s wrong with rigour?

Yes, well, ‘rigour’ is a complex metaphor. You know, in medieval times, ‘rigour’ evoked ideas of absolute perfection, a rigid universe in keeping with the ideal scholastic thesis—book, that is—as an embodiment of Christ as the incarnation of *truth*. I’m not, of course, suggesting this is the kind of rigour to which your research aspires, but¹²—

And then there’s *rigor mortis*.



Duchamp's Sister

@CassyAppadurai

7s

AJ talks about dialogic art as research and the implications this has for its practice. #diacamp

Expand



Duchamp's Sister

@CassyAppadurai

4s

AJ flags concern re tension between art and research—teleologically at odds.

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What is dialogic art

@DialogicArt

27s

DialogicArt – responds to above Teleologically? Aren't they both about producing new knowledge. #diacamp

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So either ‘perfection’ or ‘death’. Nice one, Krista. I thought you said you weren’t a very good comedian.

Allison Jones: And this is funny to you? Wasn’t it Aristotle who said, ‘There’s no knowledge of things which are in a state of flux’?¹³

Krista Wiseman: Actually, *rigor mortis* is, well—how to express this? It probably sounds strange, but I’m wondering if there’s a way to limber up your research practice? Something like an *unworking* or *loosening* of its affective relations in the spirit of dialogic exchange as dynamic.

Marsha Bradfield: Krista, I’m not really sure what you mean, but I’m interested in where this is headed. On a practical note, and assuming that our research does need ‘limbering up’, what did you have in mind?

Krista Wiseman: Well, to begin with, when it comes to the definitions or understandings of dialogic art reached in this barcamp, couldn’t they come together into something closer to Massumi’s sense of affect? As a *problematic field*—or a *complex of relations*—instead of a solution? And this tracks back to Cassy’s insistence on reframing the question, ‘What is dialogic art?’ into the problem/ statement, ‘Dialogic art is’—and we all have to fill in the blank or solve for ‘x’ to focus our discussion. But the problem with this kind of solution-oriented thinking is that it can, well, reify dialogic art in ways that stifle its dialogic disposition as an ongoing process of becoming.

Allison Jones: Personally, I thought Cassy’s suggestion was a good one. Bear in mind, Krista, that when it comes to dialogic art coalescing as a *complex of relations*, Marsha’s and my research is *already* enmeshed in plural contexts and these have a bearing on the development of our investigation. So there’s the complex of contemporary art but, in some ways, and even more immediately, there’s the *institution* of art research.

You know, Hillary’s and Marsha’s reflections on dialogic epistemology made me think of Christopher Frayling’s cardinal point about art and research. Frayling reckons that research is best understood as communicable knowledge.¹⁴ So whereas *art* is open to multiple interpretations, research by contrast needs a question, aims, objectives and methods. Research outcomes have to insist on a particular and cohesive meaning and—

David Rooksby: Rigour.

Allison Jones: Well, there needs to be a degree of *consensus* about what the research means to the field in which it aims to contribute. This agreement is largely antithetical to art, placing art research in a bind—maybe even a double bind as art on the one hand and research on the other.


David Rooksby: So neither fish nor fowl.

Cassy Appadurai: For the record, I didn’t mean to be authoritarian—or monological—when I suggested we should be solving for ‘x’, Krista. It was to check the barcamp’s progress as a format for exploring dialogic art.


Krista Wiseman: ‘Check’ as in ‘evaluate’? Or ‘check’ as in ‘arrest’? I didn’t say you were being authoritarian, Cassy. But there’s something very disconcerting about reifying dialogic art for the sake of *manageable exposition*.


 **Duchamp's Sister** @CassyAppadurai now
KW concerned that DA being reduced to 'manageable exposition' in MB and AJ's research. #diacamp
Expand

 **TheJargonBuster** @TheJargonBuste1 now
'Macropolitics' and 'micropolitics' – not difference in scale but in kind. #diacamp
Expand

 **Duchamp's Sister** @CassyAppadurai now
K.W. says 'subjectivation' = the process through which subjectivity is produced. #diacamp
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 **TheJargonBuster** @TheJargonBuste1 now
Territorialized in F.G. and G.D. – having one's body and/or mind colonized by external regimes, ex. capitalism. #diacamp
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 **Duchamp's Sister** @CassyAppadurai 49m
KW:AJ's anxiety over research outcome is palpable in barcamp. Agreed? #diacamp
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 **Duchamp's Sister** @CassyAppadurai 49m
KW:AJ's anxiety over research outcome is palpable in barcamp. Agreed? #diacamp
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Allison Jones: And you deem this *problematic*?

Krista Wiseman: Yes, and I meditating on how to approach this. You know, Félix Guattari's transversal approach may be helpful. His theory of affective politics is galvanising socially engaged practice and art as activism by conceptualising this practice in an expanded sense—transversally—across *micropolitics* and *macropolitics*. There is growing interest in Guattari's non-systematic methods—his collaborative and participatory ways of working.¹⁵

Sooo—very briefly—if macropolitics is the province of largely fixed, stratified realities that are mapped by dominant cartographies in social contexts, we can understand micropolitics, by contrast, as concerned with the flows of connections and desires that exceed macropolitical systems as broadly stable articulations. So the transformation of sensibilities across registers of affect, often occurring through relations and processes unfolding below the level of perception—that's what preoccupies the micropolitical.¹⁶

Allison Jones: Below perception?


Krista Wiseman: Right. Brilliant, isn't it? Much of Guattari's militant-psychotherapy looks at micropolitical forms of subjectivation—so, becoming subject—and how this occurs through macropolitical structuring.¹⁷ Guattari examines the territorialising effects of micropolitical forces acting in the service of macropolitical ones on this process. I find him especially useful for speculating about ways in which territorialisation might be resisted as subjects recognise, or become conscious of, how they're internalising and reproducing hegemonic orders, such as patriarchy and chauvinism. It's this resistance—this *possibility* of resisting—that I'd like to discuss here and how this might open up avenues for recomposing Allison's and Marsha's research.

Sooo—let me preface this by saying it's difficult to talk about these things and I accept in advance that we may not get very far. But it seems to me that your research, Allison and Marsha—your very *approach* to dialogic art—indicates that you've been territorialised by the macropolitics of the formalised—read: academic research. It's palpable in your *anxiety* about the concrete outcomes that you feel the research must generate to qualify as such. And of course—*of course*—this is reasonable. But the more interesting question for me is *how this anxiety may be influencing the micropolitics in the sites of your research, including this barcamp*. So I'd like to discuss how this anxiety is transmuted in subtle and not-so-subtle ways that shape things—like your management of our discussion.

Marsha Bradfield: Our *management of the discussion*?

Allison Jones: Our *anxiety*?

Krista Wiseman: Right. As I said, these are tricky things to surface and recompose. I can only really speak for myself, but I think we've all noticed the way you've nudged our discussion in certain directions and not others—and this is to be expected. As Allison has reminded us several times today, the barcamp is a site for *your* research. You have a vested interest in ensuring that what's realised here is relevant to *your* project overall. But you've got to know the




Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai

10m

KW points to evidence of affective politics in the barcamp-some voices dominating others. #diacamp

Expand




Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai

10m

KW: utterances ripple with affect. #diacamp

Expand




What is dialogic art @DialogicArt

now

Why are we talking about research when DA is the focus of our barcamp? #diacamp

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Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai

50m

KW:there's bidirectional flow between art and research. #diacamp

Expand



Phil Hind @PhilHind1

17s

For discussion on reflexivity in social science research, see Bourdieu's Science of Science and Reflexivity.

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Marsha Bradfield: But also the nods and encouraging smiles. I’ve found these very supportive. Isn’t this also an indication of us being in dialogue?

Krista Wiseman: As I’ve said, affect is a difficult thing to surface and discuss, and *especially* when it comes to things like anxiety, which I sense is circulating here.

Marsha Bradfield: Well, isn’t this understandable? The stakes of our research are high—research into dialogic art is important, in our view—

Allison Jones: Urgent!

Marsha Bradfield: As you’ve said, Krista, affect is as messy as it traffics intersubjective exchange. But I’m just wondering if, in addition to discussing our *anxiety*, we couldn’t also acknowledge our commitment to understanding dialogue as a way of recomposing subjectivation and by extension subjectivity and—

Krista Wiseman: I can, well, I hope you won’t take this the wrong way but I can *sense* your anxiety about the outcomes of this research admixing into the affective registers of this discussion. I can *feel* it in my body as a kind of in-bracing as we put dialogic art through the wringer of research—as we return, for example, to the problem-statement, ‘Dialogic art is’, etcetera. It’s starting to feel a bit *forced*—strained.

Cassy Appadurai: That strikes me as a strange thing for a self-proclaimed activist to say. Practice is always subject to strain, forces and other kinds of constr—

Krista Wiseman: Yes, but then again, when it comes to the strain that research places on practice, friends of mine who have pursued practice-based PhDs assure me there’s room for bidirectional flow and recomposition. The *art* in art research could and should also be territorialising the *research*.

David Rooksby: Ding ding.

Brian Updike: Dead right about that. This kind of transmutation is at stake in the very institution of research as a self-critical activity. One doesn’t need to be a trained researcher to know that research takes up its terms and conditions and attempts to configure them in ways that support the project at hand, so—

Krista Wiseman: But then isn’t this all the more reason for art research to *resist* being absorbed into academic research and *insist* on a different kind of relation instead—a relation based on the idea that what art research pursues is as much *an artistic approach to research* as it is *art that is research*. Most important of all, this research should serve the field of art.¹⁸



Duchamp's Sister

@CassyAppadurai

now

KW wanting to acknowledge the affective, micropolitics of the BC's dialogue. #diacamp

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Duchamp's Sister

@CassyAppadurai

now

AJ takes up K.W.'s comments re her anxiety—the personal is indeed political. #diacamp

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Duchamp's Sister

@CassyAppadurai

now

AJ:the discursive production of affect can result in crafty bullying. #diacamp

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Duchamp's Sister

@CassyAppadurai

3s

AJ:affective politics are fascist. #diacamp

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Duchamp's Sister

@CassyAppadurai

3s

MB:dialogueness of dialogue can be deeply personal. #diacamp

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Allison Jones: But don't you think that by conducting our research through this barcamp, we're actually exploring this!

John Johnson: Okay, look, I'm going to try and tack the discussion in a different direction because, well—right. What you're saying, Krista, is a good reminder that the research generated through this barcamp is specific to this context. This means that whatever outcomes we eventuate here—analytical conclusions, practical techniques, artistic forms—they'll need to be reconfigured if they're to be applied somewhere else.

Krista Wiseman: I'm saying this barcamp is a research site, dialogue is the form of this investigation and this dialogue is teaming with micropolitics that are laced with affect. These affects sculpt how we *feel*—how we experience today—and this impacts the understandings that we eventuate.

Shadworth Dyson: Yes, well, I would certainly concur that a good reason for conducting this research through dialogue is to investigate dialogue's dialogueness in all its complexity, and this includes the affective register dispersed across the social and material aspects of its intersubjective exchange.

Allison Jones: I can take that on board, but what Krista's said does, indeed, have interesting consequences for the micropolitics of this barcamp. Really, really, really interesting consequences. I mean—

Krista Wiseman: You're taking this personally.

Allison Jones: How else could I take it when you've referenced my *anxiety*? I've witnessed the reification of affect like this before, how it's made *unequivocal*.¹⁹ It's bad theatre unless very, very *skillfully* handled. Oh, it starts off innocently enough. Someone will pluck up the courage to say that they feel someone else—or some other *body*—has affected them badly, and then there's a sudden change in atmosphere. Dialogue *shuts down* or gets diverted as the interlocutors work out their personal differences. Earlier, you spoke about affect as a *transition*, likening it to a *link* in the chain of communication. Well, it can also be a *break* in the chain—affect can *decouple* subjects from each other in a productive relation and actually become *destructive*. It's a very crafty form of bullying, Krista.

Krista Wiseman: *Bullying? Seriously?*


Allison Jones: Well, you tell me how I can possibly respond to what you've been saying. That I didn't *actually* make you and others here feel anxious about my research, despite feeling this way myself? When affect gets reified like this, it almost always favours the *affected* whilst discriminating against the body doing the affecting—the *affectee*. It's fascist!

David Rooksby: Ouch!

Chris Clark: That's not true, is it?

David Rooksby: Pots and kettles. Who is the 'affected' and who is the 'affectee' here—now? Didn't a switch just happen? Wasn't Allison the 'affectee' and now she is the 'affected'? Ding ding.

Marsha Bradfield: Perhaps we could all take a deep breath. I think, Krista, that what Allie is trying to say is that both your reflections on affect and the way you've




Duchamp's Sister

@CassyAppadurai

MB:becoming hypersensitive to the micropolitics of dialogue can result in the interlocutors becoming self-conscious. #diacamp

Expand

4s




Duchamp's Sister

@CassyAppadurai

KW apologizes to AJ for getting too personal; drawing out affect in barcamp backfires. #diacamp

Expand

4s



Duchamp's Sister

@CassyAppadurai

MB says KW should proceed but does she really mean it and can she speak for AJ? #diacamp

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7s

Anne Lang:

Shadworth Dyson:

Marsha Bradfield:

David Rooksby:

Allison Jones:

Maeve Cutty:

Krista Wiseman:

Allison Jones:

Krista Wiseman:

David Rooksby:

John Johnson:

Krista Wiseman:

Allison Jones:

Krista Wiseman:

Allison Jones:

Marsha Bradfield:

Maeve Cutty:

Krista Wiseman:

Christian Wiseman:

brought them to bear on our discussion strike at the heart of dialogue and just how *charged*—how *personal*—its dialogueness can be. For sure, affect seriously sensitises us to a register of intersubjective exchange and— I’m interrupting, I know, but what you’re saying, Marsha, makes me think that intonation is *ripe* with affect. The point is, you know, that dialogic art needs to pay special attention to the intonation of the utterances, because isn’t it here that we can, sort of, sense what cannot be expressed outright?

Precisely!

But becoming hypersensitive to the micropolitics of a dialogue can also result in the interlocutors becoming self-conscious to a *fault*. And this can make ‘affective awareness’, which is something that should be empowering and enlightening, just the reverse when it *shuts down* our intersubjective exchange.


Krista, you used to be a comedian. How about a joke to break the tension? Not funny. Allison, luv, here’s a tissue. I’m confused, Allison, but will you settle for an apology? I wanted to say something about art research in general and about the affective in dialogic art in particular, and these things seemed to come together so clearly in your relationship to the research—your research positionality. I just thought—well, I just thought that discussing this might be revealing—a way of coaxing affect, which is something that is often very difficult to surface, into view. Do you see what I was trying to demonstrate?

Oh, it was *very* effective in demonstrating the power of affect. I don’t really know where to go from here. Maybe we should move on to the next presentation. David? Seriously? Okay, fair enough. This might *not* be the best time, Krista, to transition, as there’s still stuff for us to work out. Why don’t we change tack? Why don’t you try approaching affect in dialogic art, as our discussion seems to have moved away from this and in—

Right, brilliant. Okay. *Sooo*—what I’ve said about the affective aspect of this barcamp applies equally to the intersubjective exchange in dialogic art. But I’m concerned that, by saying more about this, Allison or Marsha or someone else may think that I’m just *moving on* for the sake of *moving on*.

Move on, Krista. Clearly, you’re upset, Allie. Step outside? What on earth does *that* mean? We should move on. It’s an impossible situation, isn’t it? Krista, I wonder if you’re overthinking it, at this point. I suggest we do move on.


Right, well, if that’s the consensus, then that’s exactly—*exactly* what I’ll do. Krista, don’t be that way.



Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai55m

KW:Affect is both personal and 'pre- personal,' meaning that it precedes personal relations (?) #diacamp


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Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai

KW:experience is often more liminal than it is linear.(?) #diacampnow

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Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai4s

KW:we can become conscious of experience as a result of a shift in our awareness—a cut or a gap. #diacamp

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- David Rooksby:

How about a couple of deep breaths. One—in and out. Two—in and out. Aaand, three—in and out.
- Maeve Cutty:

Tissue, Krista?
- Krista Wiseman:

No! I mean, no. No, thank you. I’m fine. Let’s just get back to Guattari. *Sooo*—Guattari examines Bakhtin’s concern with the aesthetics of enunciation, the utterance’s sensuous expression and its reception. And he begins with the idea of affect being *sticky*. It attaches itself to someone or something and won’t let go.²⁰
- David Rooksby:

Like gum in hair—it gets in so easily but it’s a bugger to get out.
- Krista Wiseman:

Something like that. *Sooo*—Guattari says the affect of an utterance sticks just as effectively to the *addresser* as it does to the *addressee* and, in so doing, it overcomes ‘the enunciative dichotomy between speaker and listener’,²¹ to which I would add subject and object. So affect is a very personal transference. But then again, it’s also in some ways what Guattari calls *pre-personal*—occurring before the circumscription of identities.²² *Sooo*—we might think of affect as something like contagion; it’s often impossible to find the source.
- Allison Jones:

But not always.
- Krista Wiseman:

No, Allison, not *always*. But if we think back to what I was saying earlier about cause and effect, when it comes to affect, we have to move beyond conceptualising experience in such linear terms and think in more liminal ones. Experience is much more complex. It’s shot through with all kinds of associations, memories, fears, joys and so on and so forth that are activated by something or²³—
- Allison Jones:

Someone.
- Krista Wiseman:

Yes, Allison, or *someone*. I get the point. I thought we were moving on.
- Shadworth Dyson:

Yes, well, yes, hmmm—another challenge to thinking about affect is that despite being spread through language, through things like intonation, it’s actually non-discursive—which is to say that it resists reification. The moment one attempts to isolate an affect, it slips its qualitative dimension²⁴ and what is displaced in the process is its significance as an eventful composition.
- Krista Wiseman:

I know that a line of thinking Guattari develops through Bakhtin’s train of thought is that, when it comes to understanding affect, it’s the ‘cut’ or the ‘gap’ that counts. These things refer to the process of turning an association or a reference around on itself. This not only gives rise to a feeling—a sensory affect—but also an active way of being. I like to think of this as a kind of *consciousness* or *awareness*, although Guattari terms it a ‘problematic effect’.²⁵
- John Johnson:

Okay, problematic in what way, Krista?
- David Rooksby:

I know, I know—that it causes problems! If this contribution is any indication, I heartedly agree.
- Krista Wiseman:

No, David. It’s not that it causes *me* problems—and here I thought *I* was the failed comedian in the room. I take ‘problematic’ here to mean that it *problematizes* our feelings as absolute or definitive and, as a result, helps us



Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai

now

KW:experience is variously understood; subjectivation is heterogeneous #diacamp

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What is dialogic art @DialogicArt

now

Why are we talking about research when DA is the focus of our barcamp? #diacamp

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Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai

4s

KW uses BM's 'microshocks' as way to think about transitions between experiential states. #diacamp

Expand

to recognise that they could, and perhaps should, be different. I should also say that, for Guattari, recognising this—I mean *really* recognising this—can impel the subject to imagine and begin composing other ways of being. This is that it has the potential to catalyse ‘deterritorialisation’.²⁶ How to put it—the *unhinging* of oneself from, or at least a greater *awareness* of, oppression, and *macropolitical* oppression, in particular.

But then again, I think we can understand Guattari’s ‘problematic effect’ in a second sense. *Sooo*—this recognition might also impel us to imagine other micropolitical ways of being by enabling us to grasp that an experience *could be* and often *is perceived* differently. Anyway, I’m not sure this is the best time to explore this.

David Rooksby: Because?

Krista Wiseman: I’d rather not say.

David Rooksby: Come on, you can’t say something like, ‘I’m not sure this is the best time to explore this’, and then not at least explain why.

Krista Wiseman: Right. Well, it gets into a multi-centred understanding or distributed experience of something. How *I* perceive something might not be the way *you* do, and vice versa. Or, to draw this towards Guattari’s thinking about the ways in which subjectivity is *composed* and *recomposed*, subjectivation is variable—heterogeneous.²⁷

Take group work as a case in point. Its affective dimensions are not experienced in the same way by all those involved, which can complicate the subjects’ coming together and *becoming* together, if you see what I mean. It’s really about developing *an awareness* that experience can be variously, well, experienced.

Shadworth Dyson: Yes, well, I would suggest there is a second way of thinking about the potency of the utterance’s affect, in terms of a kind of transmission or transition, which may well connect to what Marsha earlier referred to as a ‘charge’, or at least a ‘charging’ of the dialogueness of dialogue—as in the intensification experienced by the embodied subject.²⁸

Krista Wiseman: Massumi names this ‘a shock’.²⁹

Shadworth Dyson: Yes, well, ‘shock’ is a little misleading, don’t you think, Krista? These intensifications can reverberate through registers of affect, so they don’t always tally with what is consciously registered—although they can be deeply felt, as we’ve seen here today. And, in some ways, their stealth makes them all the more indispensable for understanding our individual and shared becoming in social events like this barcamp, where multi-current tributaries fed by pluralised territorialisations all vie for our affective response whilst at the same time shaping us—our experience—below our radar, as it were.

Maeve Cutty: Charges? Shocks? How can something be a charge or a shock if one doesn’t notice it? And can’t affect be spread in other wa—?

Krista Wiseman: *Sooo*—let me give you an example of a subtle instance of an affective shock, Maeve. Consider the slight change in my focus as I note David texting on his mobile phone. This perceptual shift affects a difference in my experience and




What is dialogic art @DialogicArt

Affect is getting a bad wrap—joy is also affective so not just a negative transference. #diacamp

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now



Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai

AJ claims she is a victim of symbolic violence #diacamp

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10s



What is dialogic art @DialogicArt

Does these mean we can think of affects as utterances and vise versa? #diacamp

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now



Shadworth Dyson @ShadworthDyson

Would say that all utterances are affective but not all affects are utterances--see chart on utterance characteristics. #diacamp

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4s

David Rooksby:

Krista Wiseman:

Phil Hind:

Allison Jones:

Chris Clark:

Marsha Bradfield:

Krista Wiseman:

David Rooksby:

KK Lin:

David Rooksby:

Krista Wiseman:

David Rooksby:

John Johnson:

Krista Wiseman:

Tina Wiseman:

possibly David’s, as well—and yours, too. Massumi understands microshocks like these as moving us between ‘consistencies’. ‘Consistency’, in his view, is the texture of every drop of experience.³⁰ Microshocks transition us between different consistencies of experience. But then again, Guattari actually comes closer to surfacing the violence of affects, when—

Violence?

Affect *is* violent—symbolically violent—to the extent that it marks a differential that is significant enough to *impel* a body into another state distinguished by a different consistency of experience. It seems so long ago that Clark proposed the ‘dialogic bonus’ as a way of describing a change—a difference—that results through ‘the dialogic’s’ management of dialogue. When it comes to affect in dialogic art, I sense this bonus results from bodies being together in a productive relation. In other words, dialogic art isn’t just about the *material* relations of dialogue—*between utterances*, that is. It’s also about the *bodily* ones—*among interlocutors*.

Krista, I have some reservations about the way you’re using ‘symbolic violence’. ‘Symbolic violence’, on Bourdieu’s account, refers to actions that are *injurious*—subtly injurious, as they shore up power relations through soft forms of control that are socially and culturally embedded, often in the form of rituals.³¹

But isn’t that *exactly* what happened when Krista accused me of *infecting* the barcamp with my anxiety and *controlling* our discussion? Isn’t this *fascist*?

Come on ladies. *Take it outside*, will you?

Clark, please. Allie—

No, Allison is right. Affect *is* messy, in part because it’s not something that we can really control.

Now you’re capitulating because Allison has squeezed out a tear or two. With all due respect, Allison, you’re overreacting.

David! You’re being *rude* to our host!

In which case, we’re her *guests* so—ding ding!

I guess it was a mistake to approach affect the way I did. I don’t really think affective politics are fascist any more than I think affect is a straightforward process of stimulus and response. I mean, there is also *thought* involved—we have *some* control over how we choose to interpret and respond to affect.³²


And, on that note, I think it’s time to turn over to David. This contribution hasn’t developed quite as I’d hoped.

Hi-ho.

Well, what had you hoped for, Krista?

Well, I assumed that dialogic art is a practice that, in keeping with its general concern with the dialogueness of dialogues, would take seriously and engage with the affective registers organising its intersubjective exchange. I also assumed this was something that we might be able to talk about in a more open and self-aware way.

Krista!




Duchamp's Sister

@CassyAppadurai

7s

KW:becoming sensitive to the power of affect can make practitioners both tough and considerate. #diacamp

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Duchamp's Sister

@CassyAppadurai

now

KW:Coming to terms with affect being both personal and not personal (pre-personal) can be empowering. #diacamp

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Duchamp's Sister

@CassyAppadurai

now

KW:Affective relations are reciprocal without being symmetrical. #diacamp

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John Johnson:

Okay but, look, don't you think we've all become *acutely* aware of these registers in this barcamp? Clearly, what's happened here has reified affect as something that's intrinsic to this exchange as both personal and shared experience.

Krista Wiseman:

It's a good point and to bring closure to this discussion, I'd like to return to Marsha's concern that becoming hypersensitive to the mircopolitics of dialogue can result in self-consciousness *to a fault*. I can see this. But then again, I'd like to think this sensitivity could make the practitioner as *tough* as it does *considerate*. Yes, affect is deeply *personal*, but it also names a complex of ethical, aesthetic, emotional and volitional dynamics that are *pre-personal*. I'm not sure I'm expressing this as well as I might do, but it's really about affect being *both* personal and *not* personal. Again, I can only speak for myself, but coming to terms with this tension has made me both more aware and more resilient. It's helped me to appreciate that my feelings *are* important and how I experience art and other kinds of practice *does* impact my contribution and experience. But it's also helped me to appreciate that, then again, the same holds true for the *other* subjects, too. As Maurizio Lazzarato makes the point with reference to Guattari's reading of Bakhtin, intersubjective space—dialogical space—is *sui generis* 'public space' that is produced through these relations.³³ John was right to say that an awareness of affect keys into the interplay between the individual and the shared, and for me surfacing and acknowledging this is incredibly important—second only to the fact that, when it comes to affective relations, they're reciprocal without being symmetrical.

Cassy Appadurai:

I think this is also really, really important. We've been talking about reciprocity like it's an equitable exchange, but this is incredibly reductive. Equitable how? It's not always equitable, is it?

Krista Wiseman:

No, it's not. And I'm hoping this might be something that dialogic art takes up and explores. *Sooo*—the ways in which reciprocity operates among individuals, among individuals and groups, among groups and other compositions of intersubjective exchange, all as reciprocal *without* being symmetrical.

Ella Stone:

And is this something you'd be interested in researching, would it not?
Reflecting on your tacit knowledge of affective politics and making it accessible to others? I ask because Brian and I often work with emerging collaborations, cooperations, collectives and other formations. Whilst each one needs to evolve its own modes of self-organisation, there is actually very little guidance available on the microplitical dimensions of collaborative art practice. As you know, we've started this publication, *Assume the Position*, and if there's interest in this barcamp in developing some shared thinking and writing around affect in shared working processes, we could publish it—perhaps even grow the project into a hardcopy publication, something like a manual of sorts.



David Rooksby: I can see the book jacket now: *Affect and Collaborative Art Practice for Dummies*.

Marsha Bradfield: I think Allison and I might be interested in this, too, Ella. Thanks for the constructive suggestion.

Allison Jones: Well, *this* is something we'll need to converse about.

Marsha Bradfield: I know I'm intrigued by the prospect of a collaboratively authored manual *by* practitioners *for* practitioners of collaborative art practice.

David Rooksby: Then you guys should talk. Marsha, the time now is 4:20.

Marsha Bradfield: David, we'll load your slides quickly, if you're ready to go. Thank you, Krista. I know this wasn't an easy contribution but I think it was productive, perhaps even *because* it was uncomfortable. Could we all give Krista a round of applause?

[Barcamp claps.]

¹Joel McKim, 'Of Microperception and Micropolitics: An Interview with Brian Massumi, 15 August 2008,' INFLeXions, no. 3 (October 2009) http://www.senselab.ca/inflexions/volume_3/node_i3/massumi_en_inflexions_vol03.html (accessed March 10, 2011).

²Ibid. Brian Massumi's gloss on affect as 'the ability to affect and be affected' reworks Spinoza's definition, encapsulated in Ethics, Part III, Definition 3: 'By affect I understand affections of the body by which the body's power of acting is increased or diminished, aided or restrained, and at the same time, the ideas of these affections'. (See Benedict de Spinoza, *Ethics*, ed. Edwin Curley [London: Penguin, 1996], 70.) Though a useful definition, Spinoza's reference to 'the body' is by no means clear, in light of his theory being psychological (of the mind), on the one hand, but a thoroughgoing account of naturalism (of nature), on the other. For a good introduction to Spinoza's naturalism and the significance of 'bodies' in this context (as referring to more than human bodies), see Todd Jerome Satter, 'Spinoza's Panpsychism,' Any: Space: Whatever, <http://www.anyspacewhatever.com/spinoza%E2%80%99s: panpsychism/> (accessed January 10, 2012).

³Massumi, 'Of Microperception and Micropolitics'.

⁴Ibid., Massumi uses a similar metaphor to describe the affective production of subjectivity when he writes, '[The] separation: connection between feeling and activation situates the account between what we would normally think of as the self on the one hand and the body on the other, in the unrolling of an event that's a becoming of the two together'.

⁵A reductive notion of affect is exemplified by Robert L. Arrington, *Western Ethics: An Historical Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), 191.

⁶Massumi, 'Of Microperception and Micropolitics'.

⁷See Spinoza's preface to Part III of *Ethics* (68–69) for an overview of his theory of causality. Here Spinoza contends that, whilst historically human beings have been conceived as living outside of nature and exercising dominion over it, we are actually subject to the same laws of nature as everything else. Spinoza writes, 'The affects, therefore, of hate, anger, envy and the like, considered in themselves, follow from the same necessity and force of Nature as the other singular things. And therefore they acknowledge certain causes, through which they are understood, and have certain properties, as worthy of our knowledge as the properties of any other thing, by the mere contemplation of which we are pleased. Therefore, I shall treat the nature and the powers of the affects, and the power of the mind over them, by the same method by which, [I have] treated God and the mind, and I shall consider human actions and appetites just as if it were a question of lines, planes and bodies.'

⁸Massumi, 'Of Microperception and Micropolitics'.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²John Wood, 'The Culture of Academic Rigour: Does Design Culture Really Need It?' *PreDesign Forum* <http://www.predesignforum.net/view.php/page/thecultureofacademicrigour> (accessed June 10, 2010).

¹³Aristotle, as quoted in Ibid.

¹⁴Christopher Frayling, as quoted in Mary Anne Francis, ‘The Artist as a Multifarious Agent: An Artist’s Theory of the Origin of Meaning’ (PhD thesis, Goldsmiths College, University of London, 2000), 21. Frayling argues that, in contrast to art, where ‘The range of meanings is potentially infinite’, research requires a ‘punchline [that] can never be that multivalent, it has to have limits and boundaries somewhere, and say ‘this is what I’m trying to put over’”.

¹⁵See, for instance, Susan Kelly, ‘Micropolitics and Transversality: Language, Subjectivity, Organisation and Contemporary Art Practice’ (PhD thesis, Goldsmiths College, University of London, 2010).

¹⁶Ibid. The definitions of micropolitics and macropolitics offered here are paraphrased from Susan Kelly’s thesis on micropolitics and contemporary art practice. Drawing on Rodrigo Nunes and Ben Trott’s thinking as expressed in ‘There is No Space for Futurology; History Will Decide: Félix Guattari on Molecular Revolution’, Kelly writes, ‘micropolitics is concerned with the flow of connections and desire that exceed stable systems of articulation, the transformations in sensibility, registers of affect, ways of relating, and processes which take place below the level of perception.’ She then goes on to define macropolitics with a quote from Suley Rolnik from ‘The Body’s Contagious Memory: Lydia Clark’s Return to the Museum’. Kelly explains macropolitics as ‘concerned with “the visible, stratified reality, the places established by the dominant cartography within a given social context, the state, parties, and also many social movements and their demands”. “Micro” and “macro” do not refer to a difference in scale, but a difference in kind: the “micro” has to do with transformations in sensibility and ways of relating; the “macro” has to do with conscious propositions, demands, visible struggles’. (15).

¹⁷Félix Guattari, ‘Machinic Proposition,’ in *Molecular Revolutions: Psychiatry and Politics* (New York: Puffin, 1994), 145–154.

¹⁸Stephen Scrivener, ‘The Art Object Does Not Embody A Form Of Knowledge’. *Working Papers in Art and Design* 2 (2002) http://sitem.herts.ac.uk/artdes_research/papers/wpades/ (accessed: March 27, 2007). In Scrivener’s view, ‘art needs to ensure that what it chooses to call research contributes to its interests first and foremost’.

¹⁹For a good discussion of reification, see Etienne Wenger, *Communities of Practice: Learning, Meaning, and Identity* (Cambridge: University Press, 1998), 57–62.

²⁰Félix Guattari, ‘Ritornellos and Existential Affects’, in *The Guattari Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), 158.

²¹Ibid. Guattari writes, ‘Affect sticks to subjectivity, it is a glischroid matter, to pick up a qualifier used by Minkowsky to describe epilepsy. Only, an affect sticks just as well to the subjectivity of the one who is its utterer as it does the one who is the addressee; and in doing so, it disqualifies the enunciative dichotomy between speaker and listener’.

²²Ibid.

²³Ibid., 158–159. Guattari writes, ‘The difficulty here lies in that the delimitation of an affect is not discursive, that is to say, not founded upon a system of distinctive oppositions inflected according to sequences of linear intelligibility and capitalised in memory banks that are mutually compatible.’ In his discussion of Bakhtin’s theory of the utterance, Guattari goes on to explore the affective significance of what he terms ‘ritournellos’, which he understands as ‘discursive sequences that are closed in upon themselves and whose function is an extrinsic catalyzing of existential affects’. (162) The taste of a biscuit, the timbre of an actor’s voice, the curve of a font: ritournellos appear at the intersection between the sensory and the expressive dimensions of enunciation.

²⁴Ibid., 159.

²⁵Ibid., 162.

²⁶Ibid., 167.

²⁷Ibid., 159.

²⁸Ibid., 167.

²⁹Massumi, ‘Of Microperception and Micropolitics’.

³⁰Ibid.

³¹See Pierre Bourdieu and Jean Claude Passeron, *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture* (London: Sage Publications, 1970 and 1990) for a comprehensive but challenging description of the foundations of Bourdieu’s theory of symbolic violence. A more accessible summary is available from Richard Jenkins, Pierre Bourdieu (Key Sociologists), ed. Peter Hamilton, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2002), 103–127.

³²Massumi, ‘Of Microperception and Micropolitics’.

³³Ibid.

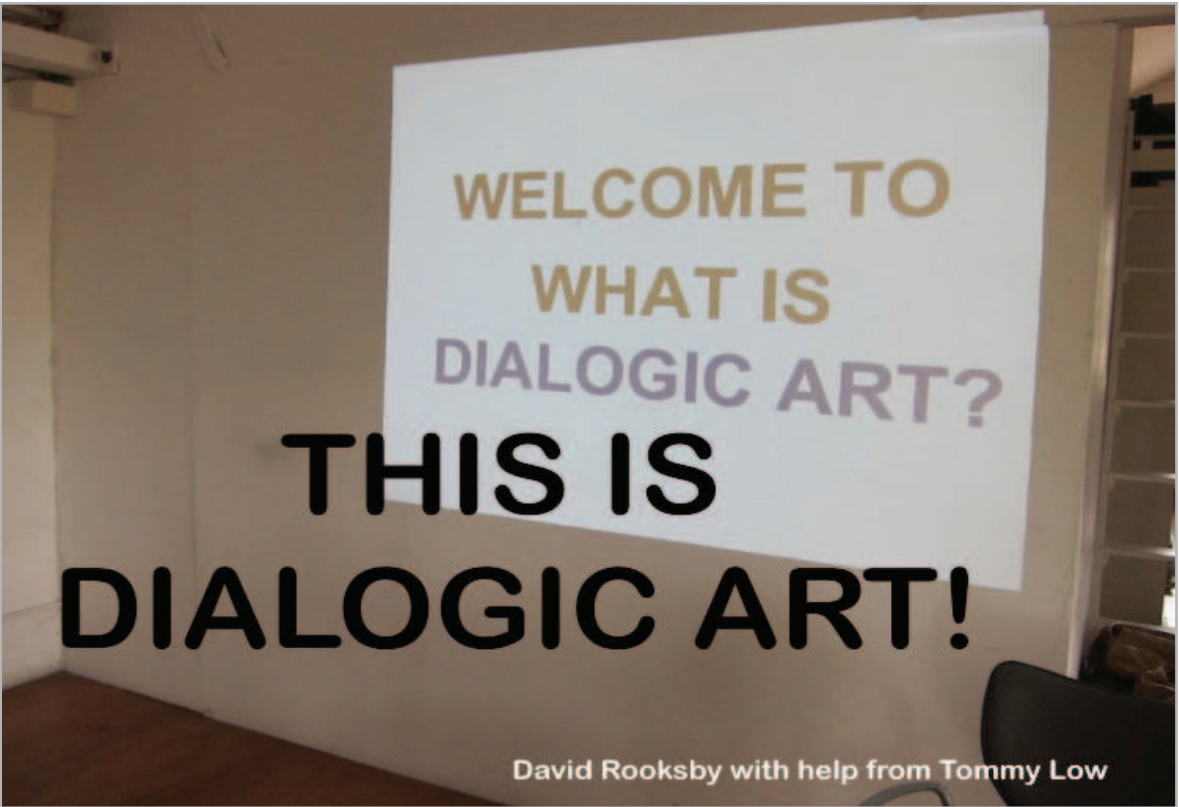


Fig. 9.0

Marsha Bradfield: David, I’ve set the timer for thirty minutes.

David Rooksby: And the slides are good to go? Great. So why am I here today? Well, once upon a time I went to art school, but today I work in the creative industries—advertising, actually. And Tommy and I saw this as an opportunity to learn about dialogic art and suggest some directions for branding it. So Tommy, bless him, has been hard at work. While we’ve been busy dialoguing with you lot, he’s been innovating some promotional material on his laptop.

Marsha Bradfield: *Promotional* material?

David Rooskby: Yeah. Think of Tommy’s and my barcamp session as a mini focus group. I’ll pitch three campaigns and we can talk about how they capture the essence—the *heart*—of dialogic art, so what sets this art apart, making it different.

John Johnson: Seriously?

David Rooksby: Sure, because here’s the thing: We’ve spoken a lot today about dialogue in contemporary art, and especially dialogue as intersubjective exchange, and how dialogic art is harnessing a wider range of dialogic activity, right? It’s like Hillary said: When theories like Bohm’s concentrate on dialogue as happening at a scheduled time, in a designated space between predetermined participants, they overlook all the other kinds of dialogue that happen—not to mention all unexpected forms of *value* they generate. Hillary gave the example of informal education through dialogue occurring on the fringes of formal study, as a way of adding value to the learner’s experience, right? This is only one example, of course. So I’ve been thinking about dialogic art as a ‘dialogue of dialogues’ and—

Cassy Appadurai: Can we assume this is your definition of dialogic art?



TheJargonBuster @TheJargonBuste1

Is anyone else having trouble with Twitter? Or maybe it's an issue with the server? #diacamp

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4s

David Rooksby:

You want a sound bite for the record? What about something like this: Dialogic art happens through a ‘dialogue of dialogues’, with this art being spread across relations and made through them. This art is also about *valuing* its own production by innovating schemes for representing the ‘dialogic bonus’. So, highlighting, zooming in on and drawing out dialogic art’s productive relations as well as the bounty—all the *value*—they produce. And it’s about helping others to better appreciate what they might otherwise take for granted by finding ways of showing what happens behind the scenes, under the surface—‘back house’. Are you with me?

Now we’ve talked about practice-based research on dialogic art generating meaning, knowledge and apprehensions that might contribute to the greater good, right? The question that springs to my mind is how to get these things *shared*. The simple answer is to think across contexts. Why reinvent the wheel when there is much to gain from applying the insights achieved in dialogic art to, say, informal education, and vice versa? Are you still with me? Now way, way back this morning, Allison spoke about art being extra-disciplinary because it *adopts* and *adapts* resources from other fields. Well, shouldn’t this cut both ways? What’s good for the goose is good for the gander?

Marsha Bradfield:

I’m not quite sure I follow?

David Rooksby:

Think of my campaigns as returning dialogic art to its roots in popular culture. They’re a chance for this art to give back—part of what we call in the industry its ‘bigger big’, going back to its roots as it lends itself to the service of the world.

Clark Chris:

Are you rationalising the instrumentalisation of dialogic art?

David Rooksby:

I’m celebrating its potential contribution beyond the ‘dominant art world’. Tommy and I are really excited about dialogic art as a mode of production for creating value—rich values but many of them difficult to catch and quantify because they’re so, what’s the word, ‘emedded’. We can think about dialogue in terms of so-called ‘soft skills’—like emotional intelligence developed through affective sensitivities and social graces that we all achieve through honing what I think Shadworth earlier described as ‘a feel for the game’. But ‘soft-skill value’ is only one type, of course. As a product for generating diverse values through hyper-distributed production, dialogic art is a prime model for entrepreneurialism as a creative practice that—

Clark Chris:

Is this a joke? Do you think you’re being funny?

David Rooksby:

Does it look like I’m laughing here? Seth Godin, the American business guru, advises entrepreneurs to imagine themselves as artists, to think of their business as a *creative practice*.¹ Daniel Pink says the MFA is the new MBA. We need artists in business to innovate and identify new forms of value.² About six months ago, The New York Times ran a four-page ad that talked about ‘curator’ being the word of the century.³ Curators are curating business information and artifacts.⁴ I can see real benefit in dialogic art as a toolbox for self-managing and enriching entrepreneurial activity in a big way.

Clark Chris:

Bloody hell!

David Rooksby: Like you said, Clark, and this is a quote, dialogic art is a way of ‘better managing and extracting value from all the dialogues that cinch together [your] art practice’.

Clark Chris: But—

David Rooksby: Well, I couldn’t agree more, but why should you have all the fun—and benefit? Why shouldn’t others profit, too?

Clark Chris: Ah. It’s an ironic display—you’re performance artists. Very convincing—bravo!

David Rooksby: Why is it so hard for you to accept that I’m sincerely interested in dialogic art?

Clark Chris: Because if you are, in fact, here to profiteer, it’s a flagrant instance of instrumentalisation that flies in the face of art’s long history of critiquing capitalist and bourgeois society. Artists have dedicated their *careers* to advocating for personal freedom and individual fulfillment and demanding social justice—the *redistribution* of wealth, environmental *accountability*, better *working* conditions. But neo-management has changed all that by co-opting this critique in the name of profit—*exploitation*.⁵ Yes, they’ve *adopted* art-world practices—you’ve *adopted* these practices—and—

David Rooksby: And by ‘art-world practices’, you mean—?

Clark Chris: You’re taking the piss. Open your eyes, David! Art has been co-opted by the service economy. Today we’re all artists and entertainers, all *entrepreneurs*, all self-styled *information managers*—artists and non-artists, alike. We’re all delivering some kind of ‘unique service’, but in return for what? It’s very much a case of being careful what you wish for—and what you work for. What’s come to be called ‘artist critique’⁶ advocated for more flexible working hours in the name of greater individual *freedom*—and we got them. It’s called *precarious labour*. Today, most work in the arts is unpaid, and it’s a business model that’s being implemented *writ large*. Don’t tell me that Tommy here is interning for free—Tommy, what’s he paying you?⁷

David Rooksby: You don’t have to answer that, Tommy. It’s none of Clark’s business.

John Johnson: Okay, look, let’s just—

Clark Chris: None of my business! You’ve got a lot of nerve. You’re here, David, to co-opt it for the benefit of *business*—to poach all our creative production. It’s revolting, really. Marsha and Allison, did you know about this?

Marsha Bradfield: No. But this barcamp is an open event; anyone can attend. So—

David Rooksby: Getting back to dialogic art. In the time remaining, I want to introduce the three campaigns, one after the other. Keep in mind these ideas are still rough. But we’re excited about the direction they could take dialogic art in by making it more *mainstream*—an approach with popular appeal, for marketing just about anything, really.

Clark Chris: *Really!* Marsha and Allison—all of you! You’re actually going to *tolerate* this expropriation? It’s bloody offensive!

David Rooksby: Don’t want to participate? Go back to the pub, Clark. Have a drink on me—have two. Tommy will text you when it’s time for Maeve’s demo on authorship.



Fig. 9.1

Clark Chris: Well, are you at least *paying* us? Not even some trivial coupon? Twenty quid’s worth of Sainsbury’s or an iTunes voucher?

David Rooksby: Look, mate, I came here today to answer the question, ‘What is dialogic art?’, just like everyone else, and brainstorm ways of taking it to the next level. I offered feedback on *your* PechaKucha—in fact, all the presentations. Now I’m just asking for the same in return.

Clark Chris: Don’t you dare ring your annoying reciprocity bell, David. Nope. I’ve had enough.

Marsha Bradfield: Clark, don’t get up. Can’t we—

David Rooksby: Let him go. It’s his prerogative. Bloody artists.

Marsha Bradfield: David, please!

David Rooksby: Like you said, Marsha, I have as much right to be here as anyone else. I’m as much a part of this barcamp as Clark is.

Clark Chris: Blimey, David. Step off!

Marsha Bradfield: Clark, I understand your concern, but—

David Rooksby: But you’re not actually going to censor my campaigns because of a difference in opinion about the value of dialogic art, because that wouldn’t be very *dialogic*—would it? In fact, wouldn’t it exemplify the ‘monological drive’ that Shadworth described as counter-dialogic? The drive to silence *other* voices? *Diverse* points of view? I believe the word is ‘dissent’—dissenting voices. I didn’t picture you as the type that would squelch dissenting voices, Marsha. Where’s your appetite for *agonism*? If anything you should be *thanking* me for providing a different perspective on dialogic art!

[Notable silence.]

Look, just hear me out, okay? That’s all I’m asking. I think you’ll be surprised by what your thinking about dialogic art has inspired! Remember Marsha’s interest in evolving this kind of art as a—let’s see if I can find the exact quote in my notes. Right, here it is—a collaborative approach to art making that, ‘in contrast to collaborative models privileging collective authorship, highlights the contributions of individual interlocutors by using their subjective utterances to structure the work’. Well, consider our campaigns a practical application of *your* contributions!

[The door slams.]

Tommy, let’s have the first slide, please. (Fig. 9.1) So, this campaign was inspired by Ella’s and Brian’s contributions. We’ve come up with the strap line, ‘Putting the “I” into “TEAM”!’ We’re keying into the idea that, in contrast to collective authorship, which denies individual expression, dialogic art opts for a more—what’s the word that’s been bandied about? Tommy? Right—‘polyphonic’. It opts for a more polyphonic take , where individual voices sound in *dynamic* relation to each other. It’s about promoting dialogic art as a way of being polyphonic.

Marsha Bradfield: Okay . . .

David Rooksby: Well isn’t it? And isn’t it it really about *belonging*, being part of something through co-authoring dialogic forms, like this barcamp, right?



Fig. 9.2

Phil Hind: Yes, quite—I mean, actually, it’s *quite* a good point. We’ve been developing a shared repertoire of understanding in our discussion today; how to work with others to evolve collaborative and participatory practices that respond to the terms of a commonly held context; and how to have your voice and contribution acknowledged and included and made meaningful as and through dialogic exchange. What we’ve been discussing, essentially, are all the criteria for membership in a *community* of sorts. Yes, dialogue as community is quite an interesting idea.

David Rooksby: Nicely said, Phil. So ‘Putting the “I” into “TEAM”’ is our first idea for an ad campaign. Thoughts on our visuals? Can you see how this gets at what Phil was just saying? No?

[Notable silence.]

Well, our second one, and we haven’t yet worked up any visuals for this, but it takes its cues from Shad’s was saying about intonation and Krista’s reflections on affect. This campaign trades on what we’ve been referring to as the ‘nonverbal register of intersubjective exchange’ by playing off the classic ‘John-Marsha’ Snowdrift shortening advert.⁸

Shadworth Dyson: If I may, David, it’s Shadworth—*Shadworth*.

David Rooksby: Right, absolutely. Sorry about that, Shad—*worth*. No offense.

Shadworth Dyson: None taken.

David Rooksby: Tommy found the original commercial on YouTube. It’s less than a minute long, so I thought it would be fun to watch it together. Tommy, roll the video. (Fig. 9.2-9.4)

‘Jo-hn.’
‘Marsha.’
‘John!’
‘Marsha!!’
‘John . . .’
‘John . . .’
‘Snowdrift.’
‘Snowdrift?’
‘Snowdrift.’
‘John.’
‘Marsha.’
‘Jo-hn.’
‘Marsha!!!’
‘John.’
‘Snowdrift?’
‘Snowdrift.’
‘Mar-sha!’
‘John!’
‘Marsh-a . . .’



Fig. 9.3



Fig. 9.4



Fig. 9.5

John Johnson: Marsha!

Marsha Bradfield: John?

David Rooksby: Catchy, isn't it! So for the remake—reiterations, actually, as we'll do a series—we'll present scenarios where characters—what Shadworth likes to call 'interlocutors'—deliver services to each other through dialogues. But instead of the *cake*, as in the Snowdrift promo, imagine a backrub or childcare or life insurance—the possibilities are endless! But rest assured, dialogic art would have the last word. Instead of 'Snowdrift' being the final utterance, it would be 'Dialogic Art'. Can you see where we're going with this? I mean this is golden product. By drawing out the intonation in a really simple dialogue, we can suggest a world rich in reciprocity. So, in this campaign we're moving from the general idea of dialogic art tapping into existence as *dialogic* into dialogic art as a lifestyle culture that's detailed through bespoke services. That's hot!

Marsha Bradfield: *Lifestyle* culture?

David Rooksby: Sure. This is where I was going before Clark—well, let's just say I got distracted. But this is what I meant by returning dialogic art to its roots in popular culture, giving dialogic art a crack at a 'bigger big'. Like I said, why limit the value of the dialogic to, well, *art*?! Why not use Clark's analytic categories to generate dialogic value in other products and services?

Okay, so our final campaign markets ways of living together, being together and growing together in, for instance, communal housing as a combination of shared and individual space. The tag line is, 'Apart, we are together'. (Fig. 9.5) The idea is inspired by the whole idea of dialogue as interdependence. I think it was Shadworth who talked about a relationship between distinct consciousnesses that come together in a communion but aren't themselves smushed together, whilst what they produce together is *shared*—it's something they hold in *common*. Right? So here, in this campaign, it's about applying the dialogic disposition to communal housing—residential space that combines private and common areas. Our campaign deploys dialogic art to contour these spaces by valuing the movement between them. It's about celebrating this passage across thresholds. It's about developing an awareness of how we compose *community*—a way of making something that we might otherwise take for granted more interesting—more *meaningful*. So what it means to be *in* community and cherish it. We see real promise in dialogic art as a way of rebranding the whole notion of neighbourhoods with the word 'becoming'. 'Apart, we are together' in our hopes, our fears and our desires. Can you see where we're going with this?

So what do you think? Pretty creative stuff, right?

[Notable silence.]

Is this the sound of thinking, or . . . We're dying for your feedback.



Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai 5s

Back on line and just in time, it seems. Things are really kicking off in Narnia! #diacamp

Expand



Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai now

PH= boundary objects as living in many worlds simultaneously. So difference emphasis from HM def= focused on BO from community perspective.

Expand Reply Delete Favorite



Shadworth Dyson @ShadworthDyson 21s

Utterances are a clear instance of boundary objects—however temporary. Back to thresholds, 'cusping' and overlap..

Expand Reply Delete Favorite

Phil Hind: Well I can’t help thinking that your campaigns highlight the significance of dialogic art as what is called a ‘boundary object’ in sociological research. The concept was developed by Susan Star and James Griesemer in their case study on Berkley’s Museum of Vertebrate Zoology?⁹ But—

Hillary Murphy: Ah yes, good connection. I’ve come across boundary objects in pedagogical theory—Etienne Wenger’s work on communities of interest and communities of practice. Here a boundary object is a threshold amongst community members.¹⁰

Allison Jones: If I may say something about how they’re being applied to art research, researchers in the California collective Sponge have also used this concept to investigate art practice as it aligns and integrates the efforts of diverse practitioners as they create and reshape artworks and creative events through negotiation and other forms of engagement.¹¹

Hillary Murphy: Interesting! Boundary objects in Wenger’s theory can be conceptual or material. A group or groups of people converge on a particular interest, you see, with the boundary object manifesting among them. Wenger gives the examples of documents, language, concepts and expressions; it’s through shared artifacts like these that the community reifies and organizes it interconnections.¹² We can even think of this barcamp as an example, par excellence!

Marsha Bradfield: Phil, do you want to add to this?

David Rooksby: But the campaigns—

Phil Hind: Well, I would say that when it comes to boundary objects, it’s useful to know that Star and Grisemer originally proposed this idea to complicate what Actor Network Theory calls ‘translation’. When it comes to realizing something—manufacturing, medicine, understandings of dialogic art—the actors involved have to commit to the activity. We can map their involvement by tracking their enrolment and movement through what sociologist John Law calls ‘an obligatory passage point’.¹³ In the case of today’s barcamp, we might think of signing up on the schedule as an instance of this—a declaration of involvement. By moving through this point, we—the actors—‘translated’ ourselves into the task at hand and this barcamp as a community intent on realizing it, which is of course to address the question, ‘What is dialogic art?’

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But Star and Grisemer suggest *another*, more *complex* way of conceptualizing translation. So, instead of looking for a single point of passage, they seek out the overlaps—the thresholds, cusps or transitions—among the spheres of obligation that the actors must negotiate on an ongoing basis in their life-work existence. Put another way, boundary objects enable us to conceptualize *inter-actor relations* as an ongoing process of *negotiation*. Star and Grisemer describe this as ‘many-to-many mapping’: it pays special attention to what happens *after* an actor or actors make an initial commitment.¹⁴ Many-to-many mapping concentrates on how this commitment is sustained and stabilized—so it’s more about an *ecology* of practice than an isolated act, a demonstration of commitment or otherwise.



What is dialogic art @DialogicArt

Interesting issue around where a story gets told from – so the perspective of individual, group—object.

Expand ↩ Reply 🗑 Delete ★ Favorite

now



Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai

PH says BC = boundary object – crosses multiple alliances – sometimes conflict – ex. CC's departure in protest.

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now



Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai

PH suggests we think of this BC as both a user-generated and user-centered.

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now

Marsha Bradfield:

Phil Hind:

David Rooksby:

Phil Hind:

David Rooksby:

[Notable silence.]

Phil Hind:

David Rooksby:

Anne Lang:

So it makes good sense to think of boundary objects as living amongst different worlds simultaneously.¹⁵ It’s a bit like a Venn diagram where some aspects are shared whilst others generate significance in distinct ways.

So, in the case of Calle’s *Take Care of Yourself*, the email would be a boundary object?

Yes, quite, and all the more so because it foregrounds a range of interpretations, points of view. The truth is, the email resonates with distinct and specific significance for the individual respondents as first-order interlocutors, as *well* as those encountering the polyphonic artwork as second-order ones. The point about boundary objects is that they’re animated by *multiple perspectives*—no one vantage point holds epistemological primacy. This makes them anti-reductionist—at least in theory.¹⁶

Nice one, Phil. But if we could get back to the campaigns, please. This is my contribution and some feedback would be good—and we’re running out of time.

Yes, yes, of course, David. But just before we do, one final thought: Star and Grisemer remark that, as the boundaries of these objects are recursively redrawn, the actors must *recalibrate* their relation to the object and each other.¹⁷ We might think of Clark’s departure as evidence of this. I expect he felt torn between his alliance to this *immediate* community, which shares this barcamp as a boundary object, and the community that shares anti-capitalist beliefs, or at least capitalist critique. But I can, of course, only speculate about this.

And finally, I should say that, though Star and Grisemer’s theory of boundary objects is useful, the truth is that it tends to overemphasise the perspectives of those who share the object at the expense of other analytic approaches. I think Marsha described the barcamp as a ‘user-generated un-conference’ in her opening remarks. I would suggest that, as a boundary object, it is also *user-centred* in its attempt to balance the diverse needs and ambitions of the community it convenes. Now this is interesting and important, to be sure. But boundary objects are invariably shaped by more than the perspectives of those who produce and maintain it. Sociologically, they are also shaped by all kinds of non-human and other actors and—

Did you say ‘balance the diverse needs and ambitions of the community that a boundary object convenes’? *Exactly*. So getting back to Tommy’s and my needs: about the campaigns—comments, questions, concerns?

I’m sorry to be so, well, clinical, David, but this silence points to the ways in which actors establish obligatory points of passage for each other—either intentionally or unintentionally—as they negotiate boundary objects.¹⁸

So this silence is pushback. Nice one.

You know I just can’t help thinking, David and Tommy, that had the campaigns been presented as dialogic *artworks*, and had you invited our feedback in



Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai now

Observes that boundary objects bring together different aspects with different mutabilities = heterogeneous.

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Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai now

SD asks MB to comment on 'the discursive' which is a term we keep hearing in this BC without much qualification.

Expand Reply Delete Favorite



Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai 7s

SD approaches 'the discursive' from the perspective of Foucault's sociological theory of discourse.

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David Rooksby:

Marsha Bradfield:

David Rooksby:

Tommy Low:

David Rooksby:

Marsha Bradfield:

David Rooksby:

Shadworth Dyson:

Marsha Bradfield:

Shadworth Dyson:

the spirit of something like art school *critique* instead of a focus-group-like scenario, there would have been no issue. But the fact that you were *forthright* enough to pitch them as advertising campaigns . . . well you're right to say that this discursive production has performative effect—

It's *discrimination*, pure and simple.

I'm sorry you feel that way. In keeping with the barcamp ethos, I think you should be able to use your slot however you see fit—assuming that your contribution isn't intentionally injurious to others involved. But by the same token, they have the right—we have the right—not to engage. For better or for worse, this goes back to our discussion about reciprocal relations being *mutual* but *unsymmetrical*.

So that's it, then.

Should I pack up our stuff?

Seriously? Why would we leave when there's so much free user-generated content up for grabs.

Well, I'm glad you're staying, David, but that's awfully cynical—

And just to show there're no hard feelings, does anyone have any *other* burning questions or concerns completely unrelated to our presentation they'd like to discuss in the time remaining?

Yes, well, we've heard quite a bit about the 'discursive' today, and Marsha made reference to this again just moments ago vis-à-vis the discursive production of dialogic art in your pitch, David. Perhaps, Marsha, you could offer a few words on how you're defining this?

Well, what to say about 'the discursive'? I suppose it's one of those elliptical words, in that its ubiquity has made it meaningless, emptied of significance. Or perhaps it has *become* ubiquitous owing to its meaninglessness. I often sense 'discursive' is used as a kind of placeholder. It's definitely imprecise. Well, let me ask you, Shadworth. What do you think of when I say 'discursive,' from a sociolinguistic point of view, at least?

'Discourse' comes to mind first and foremost. We might, of course, think of Michel Foucault's sociological sense of 'the discursive' in terms of conventions—ideas, habits, assumptions, practices, beliefs, etcetera that not only structure discourses as bodies of knowledge, such as art discourse. These conventions also structure the subjectivities of those who embody and reproduce this knowledge through their discursive interaction. Foucault speaks, for instance, of the discourse of history as *work*—labour—that is expended on material forms of documentation to produce some kind of memory.¹⁹ We might well understand both this *memory* and the *discourse* producing it as *boundary objects* shared by members of a community who purpose this memory to distinct ends. What is for me so intriguing about boundary objects is that they point to the non-equivalence of understanding, which is to say, understanding that is somehow *shared* without being *co-extensive*.



Marsha Bradfield: That’s interesting, as it seems connected with the idea of reciprocal relations as being mutual without being symmetrical.

Shadworth Dyson: Well, in the case of discourse, and I expect the same holds true for boundary objects more generally, this non-equivalence or asymmetry means the boundaries are unstable. Developments in art discourse in London, for example, may or may not mesh with those in Cape Town, with this creating tension as well as evolution in the development of this discourse more broadly. There is often *terrific* concern over where the boundaries of discourse fall and who has the authority to police them. Underpinned by epistemologies (positivist, constructionist and so on and so forth), discourses tend to inculcate certain points of view, by which I mean that discourses have *ideological dimensions* that have *practical consequences*. Foucault explores these through what he describes as ‘discursive events’. These are events that highlight the terms and conditions of a discourse, where some statements can be made and to resonate with meaning, whilst others cannot. And this distinguishes Foucault’s archeological approach to discourse from, for instance, that of language analysis, which tends to focus on the rules—syntax or semantics—that enable statements to be made.²⁰ Foucault is much closer to Bakhtin in his preoccupation with discourse being both a creature of convention and responsive to circumstance, with this response being in part how discourses evolve.

David Rooksby: Good stuff, Shad. I mean, in the case of my contribution, you have the agency *not* to engage. Fair enough. You can *kibosh* my pitch by denying me feedback—it’s practically censorship—and you can *hijack* this discursive event to your own ends. But what you can’t do is stop me from taking everything I’ve learned about dialogic art today away with me as a resource for my own creative practice.

Krista Wiseman: We get the point, David. There is always the risk with cultural forms that strive for openness and inclusivity to have whatever they produce co-opted in some way. Yup, it’s a risk for sure. But like Marsha said, I have the right not to engage. Sooo—in this spirit, back to our discussion about ‘the discursive’. As I was going to say, I think there is another way of understanding ‘the discursive’ and it’s often characteristic of the discursive art events I’ve attended. And this sense both depends on and departs from Foucault’s as you’ve sketched it, Shadworth. *This* discursive describes the way discussion can digress from subject to subject with our barcamp discussion being a case in point. So it connects with what you’re saying, Shadworth, because how these tangents come together has a lot to do with how they sit with each other as utterances at the time of their enunciation. But it also departs from, or perhaps builds on, your point about *memory* because the significance of these tangents isn’t always immediately obvious. Sooo—I guess what I’m trying to say is that what’s really interesting about a discussion often only becomes clear after the fact, in retrospect, from the perspective of the event overall and the implications it has for future talk, future exchange.



[The timer sounds.]

Shadworth Dyson: Yes, well, we can also think about the discursive with regards to Bakhtin’s theory of heteroglossia. You will recall that monologism is the centripetal drive towards stability and stasis²¹—it *insists* it can have the last word!²² Heteroglossia, by contrast, contests the monologic by insisting *there is no last word!* Heteroglossia is the clash of different languages, official and unofficial languages, dialects, accents—all tension-filled, *saturated* with history. Languages—verbal, visual, somatic and so on. These languages *contest* each other through dialogue—in discourse. And I would suggest the drift in discussion that you are describing as tangential, Krista, is due in part to heteroglossic *forces* bubbling below the surface as interlocutors attempt to shape the discussion in the service of their own design.

David Rooksby: Isn’t that *exactly* what’s happened here in the case of this barcamp as a boundary object? I can see value in dialogic art above and beyond co-creating an understanding or understandings of dialogic art of benefit to Marsha’s and Allison’s research! My question is, what happened to the idea of the ‘dialogic disposition’ as a mindset distinguished by ‘and/also’ thinking in contrast to ‘either/or’? I just don’t get why feeding back on the campaigns is such a ‘big ask’?

Maeve Cutty: Yes, well, ‘live and let live’ works well enough as long as the ideological differences aren’t too acute—by which I mean it’s still possible to bridge them. In a way, Clark was right to leave, wasn’t he? Absenting himself was the only way to opt out of your focus group, David. But even then, he has still contributed to your sense of dialogic art, because his comments over the day have helped to shape the discussion and understandings for all of us.

John Johnson: Okay, but, look, Maeve—you’re not acknowledging that Clark has also been influenced by David’s contributions. What about all the feedback he offered on the PechKucha?

David Rooksby: Doesn’t that count for *something*?

Maeve Cutty: Of course it does, luv. And I’m not saying that I approve of Clark’s departure—only that I understand it as a gesture of protest and the best course of action for him under the circumstances.

Krista Wiseman: Clearly, David, your advertising pitch affected him and he, in turn, was looking for some way to affect this barcamp—on something closer to his own terms. 337

Marsha Bradfield: You know, Allison and I organised a reading group last year on relational art, and one of the texts we discussed was Charlie Gere and Michael Corris’s *Non-Relational Aesthetics*. And here Corris talks about artist Rirkrit Tiranavanija’s dinner parties. You’ll recall that both Brian and I mentioned him earlier. Tiranavanija is perhaps best known for cooking and serving Thai curry and pad Thai. Anyway, Corris says that his dinners may only *really* be interesting from the perspective of being an artwork if something unexpected happens. After all, we’re used to dinner parties—they’re a familiar kind of social occasion. And this leads Corris to conclude that it’s unlikely that something interesting *will* happen unless it’s introduced from outside.²³But actually, ‘outside’ isn’t



Duchamp's Sister

@CassyAppadurai

now

MB compares the dialogic to keeping a window open to encourage the circulation of ideas.

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Duchamp's Sister

@CassyAppadurai

10m

Barcamp claps. #diacamp

Expand

- quite right I don’t think. By this, I think Corris means that a conscious effort needs to be made to create the right conditions for something *e/*se to unfold. I would like to believe that, as a dialogic form, this barcamp is flexible enough to accommodate something interesting—some unexpected difference—on the occasion that it might blow in, blow up and blow out.
- Maeve Cutty:** But it couldn’t accommodate Clark, could it?
- Marsha Bradfield:** I think it was rather *Clark* who couldn’t accommodate the barcamp, as it was Clark who left.
- Krista Wiseman:** ‘Blow in, blow up and blow out.’ What you’re saying, Marsha, leads me to think about the discursive as something like keeping a window open. By moving from subject to subject, it circulates ideas. I’m not quite sure where that leaves us.
- David Rooksby:** Out of time?
- Marsha Bradfield:** Well, I’ve had a text from Clark and it reads as follows: ‘All: Thanx for 2day but thought DA was something else. Best wishes, C’. So he’s not coming back, which is unfortunate but . . . but . . . I’m not sure what to say, really.
- Allison Jones:** Thank you, David, for your contribution. The discussion it generated will no doubt be very useful to our research.
- Marsha Bradfield:** Yes. Whereas earlier we wondered about how this art might be *bounded*, in this session we’ve also engaged who has the authority to take up this task—though ‘task’ is not, perhaps, the best word.
- Allison Jones:** Marsha, the time is now 4:53 and Maeve is up next.
- Marsha Bradfield:** Yes, of course. Would you please join me in thanking David with a round of applause.

[Barcamp claps.]

¹Seth Godin, *The Lynchpin* (London: Piatkus, 2010), 90. Godin writes, ‘If all art is about humanity, and commerce has become about interactions (not stuff), then commerce is now an art, too’.

²Daniel Pink, Part 1, ‘Oprah Soul Series’, *Oprah*, <http://www.oprah.com/oprahandfriends/Oprahs-Soul-Series-Webcast-Archive-Season-3> (accessed May 1, 2011).

³Andy Stefanovich in ‘Andy Stefanovich on Look at More’ interviewed by Todd Henry, #208, The Accidental Creative, MP3 audio file, <http://www.accidentalcreative.com/podcasts/ac/ac-podcast-208-andy-stefanovich-on-look-at-more> (accessed January 10, 2012).

⁴Ibid., as observed by the author.

⁵Eve Chiapello, ‘Evolution and Co-option: The “Artist Critique” of Management and Capitalism’, *Third Text* 18m no. 6 (2004), 585–594. See Chiapello for a good discussion on the ways in which ‘artist critique’ has been appropriated by neo-management, thus placing this critique—in fact, the criticality of art in general—in crisis.

⁶Ibid., 587.

⁷Carrot Workers Collective, *Surviving Internships: A Counter Guide to Free Labour in the Arts* (Independent Publication: London, 2012). See in particular ‘A Brief History of Internships in Europe and the United States,’ 10–11 for discussion on the ways in which the arts have become increasingly dominated by a culture of free labour.

⁸‘Vision Television 1953 Part 6 John & Marsha Snow Drift Cake The Wesson Oil Shortening,’ (video) <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7l4oj5DPBvU> (accessed May 10, 2012).

⁹Susan Leigh Star and James R. Griesemer, ‘Institutional Ecology, “Translations” and Boundary Objects: Amateurs and Professionals in Berkeley’s Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, 1907–39’, *Social Studies of Science*, Volume 19, 3 (August 1989): 387–420.

¹⁰Etienne Wenger, *Communities of Practice: Learning, Meaning and Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 107.

¹¹Christopher L. Salter and Sha Xin Wei, ‘Sponge: A Case Study in Practice-based Collaborative Art Research,’ *Creativity & Cognition* (2005), 97. Available from http://chrissalter.com/documents/Creativity_And_Cognition-Sponge-A_Case_Study.pdf (accessed May 10, 2012). When it comes to the role that boundary objects play in their practice, the artists clarify that, ‘Sponge’s boundary objects are actually more boundary events, with definite temporal and social extent, in which people from different communities of discourse and practice, local citizens, media festival-goers, school-children, visual artists, performance artists, designers, musicians, philosophers, programmers jointly create and reshape responsive media in a common location using their respective manipulatory techniques’.

¹²Wenger, *Communities of Practice*, 103–118.

¹³As described in Star and Griesemer, ‘Institutional Ecology’, 389.

¹⁴Ibid. 390.

¹⁵Ibid., 388.

¹⁶Ibid., 389.

¹⁷Ibid., 412–413.

¹⁸Ibid., 389.

¹⁹Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. (London: Routledge, 2002), 7.

²⁰Ibid., 27.

²¹M. M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981): 272.

²²Graham Roberts, ‘Heteroglossia’, (glossary entry) in Pam Morris, ed. *The Bakhtin Reader, Selected Writings of Bakhtin, Medvedev, Voloshinov* (New York: Oxford University Press), 24.

²³Charlie Gere and Michel Corris, *Non-relational Aesthetics* (Artworld Press: London, 2008), 24.

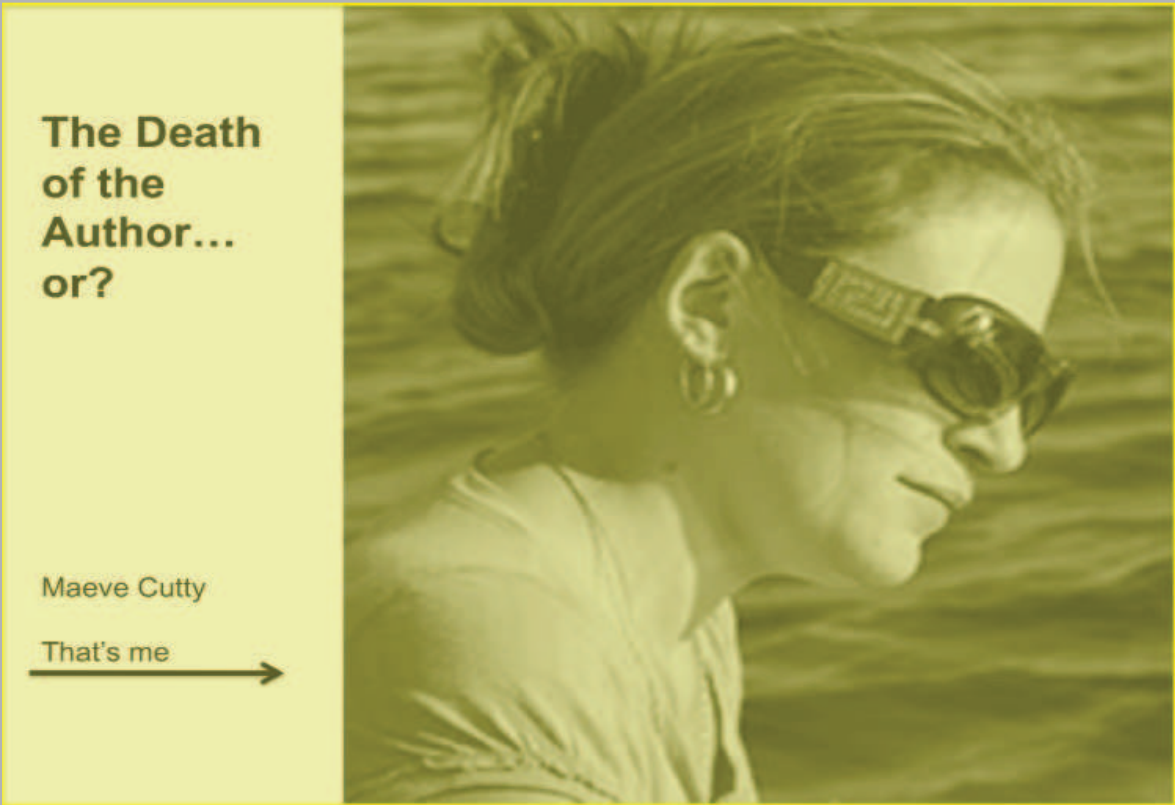


Fig. 10.0

Marsha Bradfield: Shall I set the timer for twenty-five minutes, with this giving you a final five to wrap up your contribution?

Maeve Cutty: Yeah, that sounds good. As others have said, I'd like to express my appreciation for your organising today, Marsha and Allison. Our discussion has challenged my thinking about authorship in unexpected ways, and I hope time will permit me to share at least some of them.

Now, I'm an AL—an associate lecturer—and I teach theory at several art colleges in London and beyond. I should say that I'd planned to deliver a condensed version of a lecture I recently presented to my third-year students as part of an elective on authorship. But, things do change, don't they? For starters, I hadn't anticipated that our slots would be reduced from forty minutes to thirty, but then I guess none of the other afternoon contributors did either. My point is that the full version of my lecture is an hour-and-half long, so boiling it down even further would have meant missing the lunchtime discussion *and* risking incoherence. So, in light of this afternoon's unexpected time constraints, I was faced with a very serious dilemma—*miss lunch and prepare, or take a break and reflect*.

I wouldn't normally mention this, but it seems to mesh with the whole idea of *expanding* our understanding of authorial production in the theory and practice of dialogic art, so I should say it's more than *usually* relevant. In fact, I should even say it's germane for thinking about this barcamp as a context for authoring an understanding—or understandings, as Marsha and



Duchamp's Sister

@CassyAppadurai

now

MC: to feed back on lunchtime discussion with PH and the Wisemans; time too short to deliver her lecture. #diacamp

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Duchamp's Sister

@CassyAppadurai

now

MC: lunchtime discussion = 'soft edge' of barcamp – alt. space for authoring DA #diacamp

Expand

David Rooksby:
Maeve Cutty:
[Barcamp laughs.]

Phil Hind:
Maeve Cutty:

Allison have pointed out—of dialogic art. I should also say that, as a seasoned conference attendee, I don’t like missing lunch or the other less-structured periods of the day, as I find they’re often the most productive and interesting parts of the whole event—not to mention that the food is usually pretty good. I think it was actually Hillary who was talking earlier about informal education. Anyway, her comments reminded me just how crucial the soft edges of events like this one are for *synthesising* and *complicating* new understandings of things as we strive perpetually to put theory into practice, right?

So you decided on lunch.
Well, obviously, David. I was sitting right next to you, wasn’t I!

It’s actually very interesting, because, all kidding aside, if I were delivering a paper at an academic conference it wouldn’t even *occur* to me that there was a choice. I’d work through lunch without question. But first there’s been our ongoing discussion ‘round authorship as a *responsive* process; and then I recalled Clark’s comments this morning about personal sustainability; and then I was pondering the idea that what’s normally recognised as an ‘authorial outcome’, whether it’s an artwork, a publication or what-have-you, is almost always only a fraction of what’s involved in the outcome’s production; and then I put it all together, and in that new light, I was inspired to take a different tack. And I shall explain that in a jiff, right after I’ve recovered well and truly from that awful run-on sentence.

I’m glad you did join us for lunch, Maeve. It was a good discussion.
Yeah, it was, wasn’t it? In the case of today’s barcamp, having time over lunch to unpick some of the issues—to excavate and interrogate, if you will, some of what we think about authorship, implicitly—this proved interesting. It enabled me—*us*, actually, by which I mean Phil, the Wisemans and me—to analyse what may distinguish the authorship of dialogic art. So my revised goal for the next thirty minutes is to feed back to the barcamp some of what I got out of our lunchtime conversation. In fact, I hope we’ll all four feed back, as a kind of prompt for our discussion here and now. So Phil, Tina and Christian, I hereby invite you to chip in as co-authors on this contribution.


I should say that our lunch discussion *exemplified* authorship occurring at the edges of the barcamp proper—and by barcamp proper, I mean the thirteen slots, each one designating a zone for authoring some kind of understanding, singular or plural, of dialogic art. A second reason why I found this lunchtime conversation particularly noteworthy—and, actually, I’ve only recognised this in retrospect—is that it reinforced something like *social constructivism* as an epistemic basis for the practice of dialogic art. So there we were, trading utterances and elaborating a sense of dialogic art that might be both *individual*—to the extent that we hold different views, rooted in our respective histories—and *shared*—in so far as they emerge and are tested and reconfigured through each other—and also in relation to each other. So the idea of dialogic epistemology as an instance of social constructivism really



Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai now

MC: social constructivism = active process of engagement in contrast to passive one. #diacamp

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Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai now

MC: DA holistic – integrates theory and practice by refusing to differentiate between them (?) #diacamp

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Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai 11s

MC: DA turns on authorship qua authorship – it's art about authorship. #diacamp

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highlights dialogic art as something that produces knowledge through an *activity*—something that turns on engagement rather than observation. And for me, what our lunchtime exchange—and in fact, this whole barcamp—has snapped into focus is an acceptance, or maybe a *celebration*, of a wide range of views, sensibilities and approaches that feed into a co-constructed, co-authored understanding. But—and this is a big but—is this encapsulates *how* social constructivism is being manifested in our barcamp. *But* there is also the question of *where* this occurs. Because, as we’ve heard several times today, when it comes to the authorship of dialogic art, it is both *distributed* and *contingent*.

All of this assumes, of course, that dialogic art does *not* make a clear distinction between the way it’s theorised in contexts like our barcamp here today as a dialogic form, and other dialogic forms that come together as dialogic works of art—if you see what I mean. They’re all dialogic.

Phil Hind: Yes, indeed. And I also think dialogic forms are central to organising dialogic art, Maeve. In keeping with this observation, an especially interesting aspect of our discussion, as far as I’m concerned, pertained to the ways in which the authorship of this art is accomplished through the contributions of both human and non-human actors—

Maeve Cutty: Or *authors*, in the language of cultural and literary theory. So, we have authorial subjects, who author dialogic art through their intersubjective exchange; and then we also have things like the material-semiotic aspects of their utterances, which have something like non-human authorial agency. And I agree, Phil, this is something else we should explore further in the next half-hour. I’d like to take as my point of departure my growing conviction that dialogic art turns on what I’d call authorship *qua* authorship. By this, I mean authorship in the capacity of authorship or, to put it another way, authorship *as* authorship—so, authorship that’s concerned with its own authorial practice. This is the ground I’d like to cover—or at least begin covering—in the next half-hour in lieu of my prepared lecture, although it’s probably already five minutes less than that—assuming that’s okay with all of you.

Marsha Bradfield: Well, yes. Coming to terms with the constitutive role that authorship plays in dialogic art strikes me as in keeping with how our sense of this practice is evolving over the day, with us constantly circling around this subject.

Maeve Cutty: Good. Right, then. So, for starters, let me observe that authorship brings to my mind certain practices, conventions and institutions, that function together in ways that are, at once, both *predictable* and *mysterious*.

Authors, themselves, well understand some of the functional and predictable demands of their own authorship. ‘To author’ is to produce something that’s going to be experienced by someone else—it’s going to be ‘read’ by an other, and I’m using the word ‘reading’ in a broad and inclusive sense, here.

David Rooksby: Maeve, I’m sorry to interrupt, but what were you planning to lecture us *on*? Not knowing is killing me.



Fig. 10.1

Maeve Cutty: Ha! It's always good to know one can still tantalise, isn't it? I promise to try and weave aspects of this into our exchange, David, but, basically, I was going to focus on some of the more *mysterious* dimensions of authorship, elaborated through post-structuralist theory.

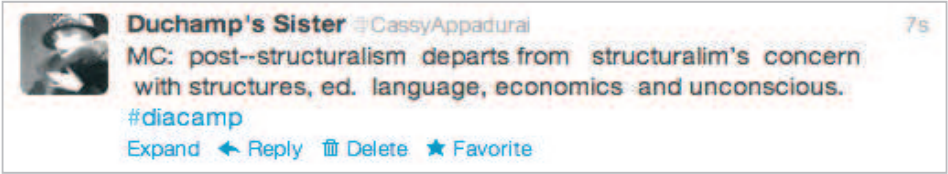
David Rooksby: The *mysterious* aspects of authorship? That does sound tantalising!

Maeve Cutty: Well, for starters, two quick comments: First, Marsha's going to post a version of my full lecture on her website, marshabradfield.com, in case any of you are interested enough in this subject to listen to an hour-and-a-half long audio recording of me talking; that, all by itself; takes a brave heart. There are, of course, visuals to add entertainment value, as I've synched the whole production with PowerPoint slides. All in all, not an evening at the cinema, perhaps, but some of you might like it. Second, the post-structuralist and other authorial theories I'll be referencing might not be familiar to all of you. You can, of course, ask questions. For anyone who wants additional information, you'll find most of what you'll need in a book called *Theories of Authorship*, edited by John Caughie. It's the textbook for the elective I referred to earlier; recalling that my contribution to this discussion is informed by the lecture I'd prepared as part of that elective course.

Now, back to the issue of 'mystery' that's got David all excited. I see the *mystery* of authorship in a rub between the *theory* and *practice* of 'the author'. This is a source of, well, uncertainty for many authors as they try to integrate theory into practice. I want to draw out a *particular* friction that authors experience. This friction arises between the author as a living, breathing, sovereign subject—by which I mean a factic or historical individual—engaged in authorial practice *and* theories that hold authorship to be—as distributed and contingent. I hope, in due course, you will see how this would complicate the way we understand the relation between what I'll call 'the author' and 'the authored'.

I should say, also, that my thinking is informed by and responds to two post-structuralists whose names have already come up several times today. I'm speaking particularly with regards to Roland Barthes and his essay, 'The Death of the Author' and Michel Foucault and *his* essay, 'What is an Author?' as well as the commentary associated with those two pivotal works. (Fig.10.2) As part of the canon of authorial theory, both of these essays are touchstones that aim to problematise how 'the author', in a broad sense, has been historically theorised. Barthes and Foucault both acknowledge the ways authorship outstrips the efforts and output of any individual producer. So this makes authorship into a practice that's far more dispersed—diffused even—than is usually acknowledged.

Anne Lang: Speaking of authorship being a *diffuse* practice, could you clarify how you're taking up and applying *post-structuralist* theory here? You know, when it comes to subjectivity, I think there's general agreement that post-structuralism explores the self as multiple and *diffuse*, contrasted with the enlightenment or Cartesian subject—the universal subject—as largely stable



Maeve Cutty:


and coherent.¹ But could you say a few words about post-structuralism in general. I mean, it might help to explain *the basis* for post-structuralist subjectivity. That’s assuming you’re going to suggest, with dialogic art I mean, the subjectivity it gives rise to is based on a post-structuralist model. Is that where you’re going with reference to Barthes and Foucault?

Good question. Now let’s see if I can come up with a good answer! For starters, post-structuralism is what I would call a ‘broad church’. I say this because it brings together a loosely affiliated body of mainly French theory from the 1960s and 1970s. This theory aims, among other things, to complicate the idea that the world is produced and reproduced through *structures*. There are three examples of socio-structural organisation that are often referenced, including *language*, *economics* and the *unconscious*. We’ve explored two of these three today to one degree or another.

You’ll recall that Shadworth mentioned that Ferdinand de Saussure theorised language through *structural* linguistics, whilst Bakhtin’s meta-linguistics took a more *post-structuralist* approach. Bakhtin foregrounded the ways in which communication is achieved through a combination of characteristics or aspects. These are both linguistic and non-linguistic in nature, and they include intonation, with this pointing to the way that communication outstrips language as an abstract code.

Now when it comes to *economic* structures informing structuralist thinking, Ella tapped into something interesting through her look at John Roberts’s theory of collective collaboration. Informed by, but also departing from, Roberts’s Marxist thinking, she advanced the idea that we can’t just reduce the alienation often experienced by group workers to economic considerations. This is something that can also occur when an individual’s voice, or will, becomes subsumed as part of a collective one. I’m not really doing justice here to our heated discussion over what constitutes alienation in collaborative art practice, but when it comes to dialogic art, a central idea seemed to be that it might be able to explore a broader range of—or perhaps more *nuanced* forms of—alienation than Marxism from a largely structuralist perspective would allow.

Now, something I’ve noticed as missing from today’s discussions is an explicit exploration of Freudian psychoanalysis. This, of course, holds fast to the view that the human psyche is motivated by the unconscious. No surprise there, right? So this is the third important structure to note. I think Krista’s discussion on *affect* came closest to acknowledging that which hovers below the surface of our intersubjective exchange. At the very least, *affect* shares with the unconscious a resistance to being expressed *outright*, so they’re both supple structures that resist easy apprehension. All this is to say that I think we’ve been edging towards the relation between structuralism and post-structuralism all day long. It might be useful to expressly acknowledge




Duchamp's Sister

@CassyAppadurai

now

MC: Dialogic art is a higher order dialogue that brings into relation: author, authored authorship. #diacamp

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What is dialogic art

@DialogicArt

9s

We can also think of post--structuralism as a way of living on the borderlines: we're structured by we're not...#diacamp

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Duchamp's Sister

@CassyAppadurai

3s

PH: Dialogic art is a higher order dialogue that brings into relation: author, authored authorship. #diacamp

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Duchamp's Sister

@CassyAppadurai

10m

SD: AUTHOR-GOD=type of the universal subject critiqued by post-structural theory #diacamp

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Shadworth Dyson:

Yes, well, this is not to say that post-structuralists *deny* the existence of structures but rather that they contest their universality and objectivity, as in the case of Bakhtin’s post-structuralist meditations on dialogue, where primacy is placed on the interplay between interlocutors and their shared spatiotemporal horizon as a local and immediate context. Though it is quite correct to say they communicate through language as a shared structure, this communication unfolds in response to the specific and situated requirements of their intersubjective exchange, the crux of the matter being that, from a post-structuralist perspective, the world *is*, to some extent, organised by structures. However, to grasp the significance of these structures, we must not only study the structures themselves, but also the ways in which they come into being—the forces, conditions—the slippages, cracks and fissures—and other considerations that shape how they organise our very existence, moment-by-moment—from our situated and specific point of view.

Phil Hind:

Yes, quite, but we can also connect our discussion of post-structuralism back to boundary objects. Recall we explored them as aggregates that coordinate the perspectives of various stakeholders. From a post-structuralist perspective, the significance of boundary objects resides in their coming together, staying together and even falling apart as they are fashioned by a huge range of forces and counter forces that outstretch meta-narratives as easy explanations that deny the complexity of how things *actually* work—or *don’t*. Over lunch, we discussed the importance of dialogic art in developing an awareness of authorship as it connects the distribution of authorial practice with the author’s authorial subjectivity as multiple, malleable and dispersed.

Maeve Cutty:

Well for me, exploring the threshold among ‘the author’, their ‘authorship’ and *what* they author is what lies at the heart of dialogic art, don’t you agree? It seems to be another way of describing this art as composed of a *higher order* dialogue—a dialogue that brings into relation the dialogues through which dialogic art emerges and makes this explicit.

But, I’d like to go back now to Anne’s question about post-structuralist subjectivity and the universal subject. When it comes to theories of authorship advanced by both Foucault and Barthes, both take issue with ‘the Author-God’,² as Barthes calls it. Or perhaps it would be more accurate to say they take issue with the idea that authors not only produce but also control the meaning of their authorial output.

Shadworth Dyson:

Yes, yes, of course—the ‘Author-God’ is a version of the universal subject. In a way, yes. Both Foucault and Barthes critique what others have identified as the *theo-auteurist*, which is not a tourist named Theo—sorry, a little silly humour to see who’s still awake—but rather an author who enjoys *exceptional* authority on their own text³—wouldn’t that be lovely? So,

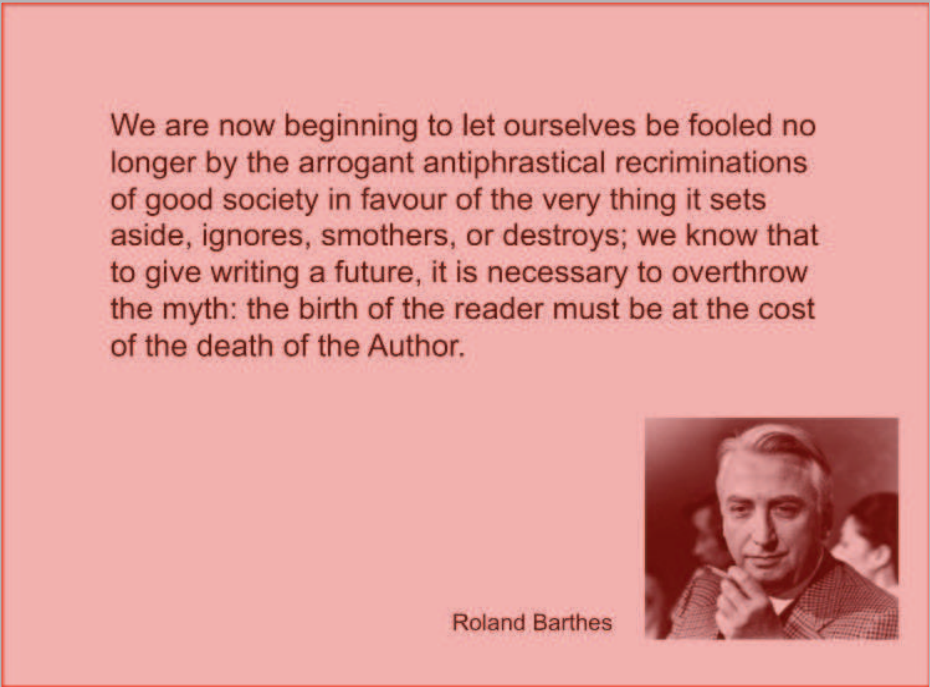


Fig. 10.2

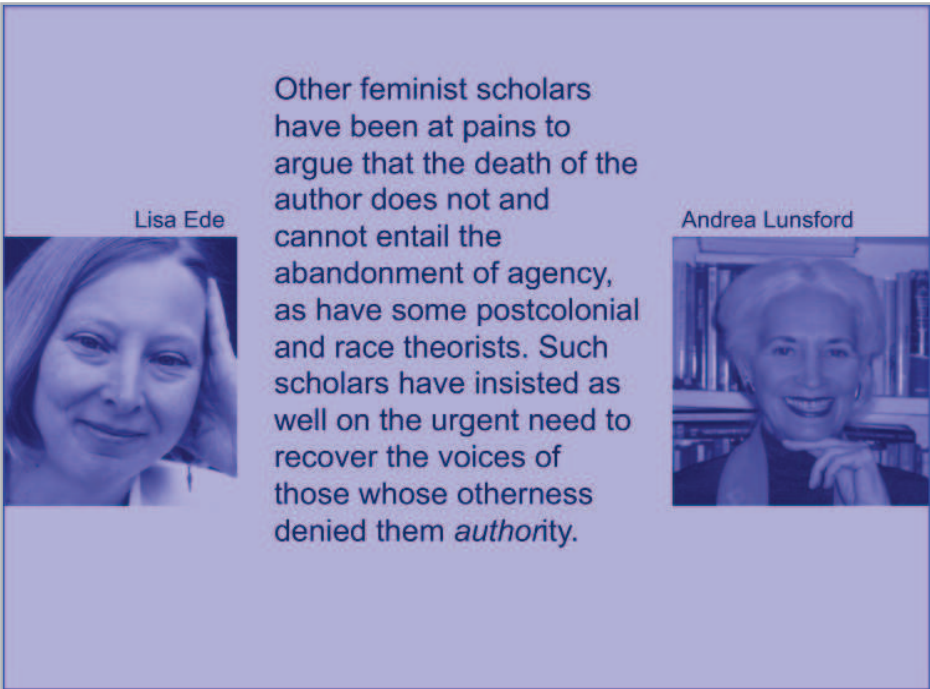
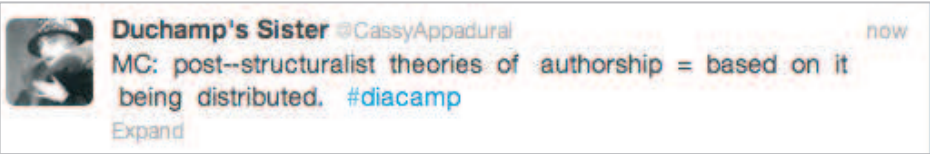


Fig. 10.3

theo-auteurism—which loosely translates in layperson’s terms into ‘man-in-his-work criticism’—roots into the idea that, through careful analysis of the author’s output, we can achieve access to his or her personality and character.⁴

Now, as the title of Barthes’s essay suggests, his post-structuralist position issues from his call for the author’s demise—hence, ‘The Death of the Author’.

What, like pushing up daisies?

Well, Barthes is not, of course, calling for the author’s *literal* death, but instead the demise of the ‘Author-God’ as an authorial position marked by absolute privilege. Because, contrary to the perspective advanced by *theo-auteurism*—it’s a mouthful to say, isn’t it?—when it comes to post-structuralist theories of authorship, the author does *not enjoy* absolute ‘authority, presence, intention, omniscience and creativity’—as Seán Burke’s notes in his commentary on Barthes’ essay.⁵ Rather, authorship *also* occurs through the *reception* and *interpretation* of the authored. So Barthes’s theory is a corrective of sorts. As Barthes says right at the end of his canonical text—rather polemically, I might add—

David Rooksby:
Maeve Cutty:

We are now beginning to let ourselves be fooled no longer by the arrogant antiphrastical recriminations of good society in favour of the very thing it sets aside, ignores, smothers, or destroys; we know that to give writing a future, it is necessary to overthrow the myth: the birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the Author.⁶ (Fig. 10.3)


Ella Stone:

Bien sûr, ‘the birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the author’. *Mais*, and with all due respect, Maeve, these closing lines of Barthes’ essay have always, how should I say, *irritated* me. Why conceptualise authorship in terms that are so either/or? This whole idea of the author ‘dying’ really isn’t ideal because where is the *agency* of the factic author in this ‘Author-God’s’ wake? I know, of course, that Barthes is being polemical, but even so.

Maeve Cutty:

Well, take heart, Ella, you’re in good company in your ‘irritation’. This is something Lisa Ede and Andrea Lunsford raise in their broader discussion of authorship as a collaborative practice when they consider the *political* consequences of Barthes’s mandate. They wonder if it was merely coincidence that the ‘author’s death’ appeared at *precisely* the time when women and authors of colour were beginning to publish and gain recognition. I have a quote here somewhere. Bear with me—ah! Here it is:


Other feminist scholars have been at pains to argue that the death of the author does not and cannot entail the abandonment of agency, as have some postcolonial and race theorists. Such scholars have insisted as well on the urgent need to recover the voices of those whose otherness denied them *authority*.⁷ (Fig. 10.3)



Popular wisdom warns us that we frequently substitute the wish for the deed, and when, in 1968, Roland Barthes announced the death of the author, he was actually calling for it. Nor did Roland Barthes himself sign up for suicide, but wrote his way into the College of France where he performed *volte faces* for an admiring audience.

William H. Gass

Fig. 10.4




Duchamp's Sister

@CassyAppadurai

now

MC: irony: Barthes is an author with the authority to mandate the author's death. #diacamp

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Duchamp's Sister

@CassyAppadurai

now

MC: Post-structuralis theory: We can't live with the subject and without them either.

Expand Reply Delete Favorite



Duchamp's Sister

@CassyAppadurai

7s

MC:What would it mean to say that 'I' or 'we' authored dialogic art?. #diacamp

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David Rooksby: Now, just a minute, Maeve. If I follow what you’re saying, Barthes wants to kill off the author, figuratively speaking—or a least kill off the author’s authority, right?

Maeve Cutty: Yes.

David Rooksby: But you also seem to be implying, ironically, that Barthes is an author with the *authority* to *mandate* this death! So is this a case of the right hand not knowing what the left hand is doing or having your cake and eating it too?

Maeve Cutty: Well, it’s a contradiction, for sure, and one that William H. Gass pokes fun at in the opening lines of his critique of Barthes’s essay. Here’s the slide:

Popular wisdom warns us that we frequently substitute the wish for the deed, and when, in 1968, Roland Barthes announced the death of the author, he was actually calling for it. Nor did Roland Barthes himself sign up for suicide, but wrote his way into the College of France where he performed *volte faces* for an admiring audience.⁸ (Fig. 10.4)


I think this points to something Jeffery T. Nealon says; he says it with reference to ethics, but for my money it applies to authorship just as well. Nealon says that, when it comes to post-structuralist theory, we seem to have a case of ‘can’t live with the subject, but we can’t live without it either’.⁹ This was something else we wrestled with over lunch. So, what ‘bout if I ask you all the same question I put to Phil and the Wisemans? In keeping with my sense that dialogic art as an approach to cultural production explores authorship *qua* authorship, how does it balance these two concerns? How does dialogic art acknowledge the authorial contributions of living, breathing, sovereign authors—authors who contribute to dialogues, and thereby bring dialogic art into being? And not only that, but at the same time, how does dialogic art *also* recognise that both the authors’ subjectivities and what the authors produce is never self-contained, as it were, but always contingent and distributed? Or, to try another tack, what would it mean to say that I—or we—authored a dialogic work of art? What would that claim entail? And how might it be explored as an or concern *in* the artworks produced through this artistic practice?

Marsha Bradfield: Well, what did Phil and the Wisemans say?

Maeve Cutty: Well, somewhat predictably, Phil-the-sociologist immediately went for the sociological side of Foucault’s thinking in ‘What is an Author?’

Phil Hind: Ha! Yes, quite. But, seriously, I was merely echoing the observation that Maeve made earlier today that when it comes to authorship, the author’s initial efforts—putting words on paper, creating an artwork—are really just moments in an *ongoing* and multiplex process of authorial practice. Isn’t that a little more accurate, Maeve? Yes it’s sociological but it also trails your comments earlier about, for instance, Foucault’s interest in developing a ‘theory of the work’, with this having a sociological dimension, of course.


Maeve Cutty: But we should also mention that Foucault, responding to Barthes’s text, explores this through what he calls ‘the author function’.^{10*}



Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai 10m

DA actually dispersed across at least four considerations: author, authorship, authored as both practice and outcome. #diacamp

Expand



What is dialogic art @DialogicArt now

#diacamp: So attention = value. See S Wright's discussion of the attention economy


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Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai 38m

MC: There is a distinction to be made between the social significance of authorship and what it means to individual authors. #diacamp

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Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai 37m

MC: authorship makes authors subject to punishment – connects with attribution. #diacamp

Expand

Phil Hind: Yes, of course. So if Barthes foregrounds the reader as author, Foucault foregrounds other aspects of what Maeve has been calling ‘the authored’ — for example, ‘the authored’ as a *function* of discourse, having the force of ‘circulation, valorisation, attribution and appropriation’,¹¹ in Foucault’s words. The turnkey of both Barthes’s and Foucault’s discussions is, of course, that *the authored* is *authored* by more than *the author*. The sooner we acknowledge the sociologically complex terms and conditions of authorship, the sooner we can begin to understand what it means to say that something is authored—whether it’s a dialogic artwork or anything else.

Maeve Cutty: I think that’s quite right. Today’s barcamp discussion has elaborated dialogic art as an approach to authorship spread across its practice, the artwork to which that authorship gives rise and the artwork’s subsequent authorship through its encounter and commentary.

David Rookby: So Maeve, back to your earlier question: ‘Is Nietzsche’s laundry list a “work”? Is it authored or not?’

Maeve Cutty: Well from a post-structuralist perspective, this would surely depend on your point of view. When Gass takes a look at this issue, he refers to Beckett and remarks that sometimes an author’s so-called ‘private’ works are made accessible and even included in what has historically been referred to as his or her *œuvre*. So in his response to what it means to claim that something is authored, Gass says [with luscious language, I might add] that ‘Beckett’s schoolboy copybooks are [authored] too, and attract lawyers and legalese as though they were papers sticky with honey’.¹² So, let me ask you all, ‘Do these copybooks attract this kind of attention because Beckett authored them or does this attention designate them as authored?’¹³ Phil perhaps you could share what you said over lunch?

Phil Hind: Yes, yes, of course. As I’ve said, I don’t think these dynamics can be pulled apart; they act on each other with performative reciprocity.

David Rooksby: Ding ding.

Phil Hind: Yes, quite. It’s my view the copybooks attract attention *because* Beckett authored them, and this attention in turn cements the prolificacy of his authorship. But perhaps you should also talk about your student’s question, Maeve, as I think it makes a cogent point.

Maeve Cutty: Well, in response to Gass’ quote, one of my students came up with a real corker: he wondered whether we *desire* these copybooks to be authored by Beckett and, if we do, in what ways does this attribution inform how we read them?¹⁴ Anyway, for me, this runs head first into the broader and ongoing question of the relation between the author and *what* they author, and especially its broader *social significance* of authorship, in contrast with the author’s personal relationship with their work. And I believe that it was at about this point in our lunch-hour discussion, Phil, that you observed how the origins of authorship are wrapped up with the law. Would you like to speak about that, and give me a little break?



Duchamp's Sister

@CassyAppadurai

31m

TW: Back to TCY – relation between authorship and ownership via attribution. #diacamp

Expand



Duchamp's Sister

@CassyAppadurai

36m

TW: What is the relation between authors and what they author? #diacamp

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Duchamp's Sister

@CassyAppadurai

30m

TW: post-structuralism has put the subject on display. #diacamp

Expand

Phil Hind:

Yes, yes, of course. Thank you, Maeve. Well again, I was thinking about Foucault’s discussion in ‘What is an Author?’ where he tells us that it was only really when texts and books and discourses began to have authors who were subject to punishment that discourses became transgressive.¹⁵

The question is, what makes a discourse *transgressive* and why is this so important to conceptualising authorship? Foucault asks us to think about this as a twofold shift. On the one hand, we can mark this as a movement in *content*, which in practice means shifting from ‘the sacred to the profane, the licit and illicit, the religious and the blasphemous’,¹⁶ as far as Foucault is concerned. This shift resonates within a system of dominant perceptions and beliefs that, up until the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were broadly aligned with the Christian Church. So, to be *transgressive* in this historical sense, and from the perspective of Foucault’s reading of authorial practice in the West, is to go *against* the perceptions of the Church as an institution—and the truth is, not just *any* institution, but a *legislative body* with tremendous *authority*.

But Foucault also asks us to think about authorship as transgressive in a second and more contemporary sense, this one located at the intersection of law and capitalism. In this case—and this makes good sense to me—this movement relates more to *form*. It is the difference between authorship as *an act* as opposed to producing ‘a product, a thing, a kind of goods’.¹⁷ These circulate within the system of property relations that characterise our secular culture today, wrapped up in complex considerations like copyright. Authors produce novels, poems and blogs, yes, but also films, artworks and interventions and—

Tina Wiseman:

Yes, Phil, but as I tried to say over lunch and to echo Ella’s concerns expressed moments ago, for me—and Christian too—what’s more important than what authors produce is that *they* produce it through some kind of act, some activity. So, I think we also need to consider the author’s *relationship* to their practice and *what* they author. And, in a way, this goes to the various complexities about this relation that were flagged in Ella’s discussion of *Take Care of Yourself*. Here I’m thinking, for instance, about the relation between the respondents’ responses and the way they figured in Calle’s artwork, with this being attributed to her first and foremost. On the other hand, I know that for you, Phil, the connection that Foucault makes between authorship and ownership is especially important, which I suppose is yet another way of examining the often fraught relation between *authors* and *what* they author. Yes, quite. It’s important to me because it acknowledges that authorship is treacherous, particularly when it means that the authored can be attributed to a factic, historical, flesh-and-blood individual who, under the law, is accountable for their authorial production.¹⁸

Tina Wiseman:

But, Phil, from our perspective as artists who work largely in collaboration with other flesh-and-blood authors, what is prime to any discussion on authorship is its importance to *authorial agency*, with authorship being a



space for *self-expression*—both more or less individual and more or less shared.¹⁹ You know it’s not as though post-structuralism has emancipated humanity. Though it *has* put the decentred subject on display. In and of itself, this display is not a problem, but when it becomes a stand-in for actually *taking action* and insisting on the *representation* of your own voice, well then there *is* a problem, I think.²⁰ I suppose that what I’m trying to say is that from an author’s perspective don’t we need authorship *all the more* as a political position of struggle from which to wrestle with who we are in the world as well as the conditions of our existence?²¹

Phil Hind: Yes, but, Tina, as I tried to suggest, I think we need to tease apart the politics of authorship and its material composition. And there is also agency in the author’s *dissociation* from what they author. By refusing ownership that comes with attribution, in some ways they have space for *more* voice. An anonymous or collective voice can sometimes say *more* than one that can be *prosecuted*, when its owner is known.

Maeve Cutty: Moreover, both Barthes and Foucault note in their essays that, when it comes to the ‘I’ writing, this textual ‘I’ is not the same as what we might term the factic or historical ‘I’. To borrow a linguistic term from Roman Jakobson, this textual ‘I’ is a shifter. Barthes says the ‘I’ is just an instance of writing, that language knows the grammatical subject—he, she, they—but not the enunciating person.²² And what ‘bout what Foucault says—that when we read a novel, we know the ‘I’ narrating is not the same ‘I’ as the author. I should say this ‘I’ is really a kind of alter ego operating at a distance—granted, a distance that varies rather than a constant distance—from the factic individual who’s writing.²³ So, I should say that the historical person of Michel Foucault may have written ‘The Death of the Author’, but it would be naïve, wouldn’t it, to assume that it’s literally he who is actually, as Barthes might put it, ‘confiding’²⁴ in us.

Shadworth Dyson: Ah ha! I was wondering when this discussion would alight on what we’ve been calling the ‘dialogueness of dialogues’—the socio-materiality at stake in the textuality of utterances.

Maeve Cutty: And this is an important point, Shadworth, because language is, after all, central to Barthes’s theory of authorship. He describes, for instance, language as a space into which the writing subject disappears. So in this way, in its capacity to disappear the subject, language has authorial agency too. Right?

Phil Hind: Yes, yes, of course. But, Maeve, aren’t you pinching a quote from Foucault? Or, at least, this is expressed almost word for word in ‘What Is an Author?’²⁵

Maeve Cutty: So what are you now, luv, the attribution police? Ha! All right, all right, I’ll attribute the authorship of that gem to Foucault. But for me this points to the ways in which these two essays author each other.

David Rooksby: Ding ding.

Maeve Cutty: Though it’s true that Foucault is responding directly to Barthes, the polemic of Barthes’s essay anticipates—or rather invites, or even insists on—such a critical rejoinder in the likes of ‘What is an Author?’ Yet, whether you’re



lonely collaborator @LCollaborator

#diacamp Barthes—meaning and pleasure!

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now



Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai

TW: Where is the agency in Barthes's theory of authorship?

Expand Reply Delete Favorite

30m



Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai

Contradiction in art school culture: the author is dead but assessment based on the individual author-- student = re--inscribed...#diacamp

Expand

27m

reading Foucault or Barthes, they’ll both say language is not an abstract code, as Saussure’s linguistics theories would have it. Nor is it a key that magically unlocks the author’s inner world or personal history, as in theo-auteurism. And *nor* is language mere ‘messaging’, nothing more than a transparent transmission of meaning. So when Barthes says, ‘[I]t is language which speaks, not the author; through a prerequisite impersonality . . . to reach that point where only language acts, “performs”, and not “me”’,²⁶ what he’s actually doing is valorising both the anonymising and performative potential of language. You see? It’s this play of visual, somatic and other semiotic systems that communicate the meanings—in the plural—of a text, right? The reader’s encounter then catalyses this communication, and brings forth interpretations through their, the reader’s, responsive understanding. And this, of course, is quite different than reading as a process of uncovering some kind of “secret” or ultimate meaning’, that’s been authorised by some Author-God.²⁷

Tina Wiseman: Well, yes, Maeve, but what does this mean for dialogic art? What does it mean if Christian and I are of the opinion that this art is a space for self-expression and political organisation, whilst you, Phil and others believe it’s a space in which to disappear the subject?


Maeve Cutty: So you’re saying there’s a contradiction here.

Tina Wiseman: I am. For whilst Barthes’s and Foucault’s thinking is fascinating in theory, where does it leave the author *in practice*? What agency do they afford to flesh-and-blood authorial subjects? I think this is something that we need to address and I’m sure Christian will agree with me—and I hope Marsha, too—that it provides on obvious point of departure for our conversation on the ethics of authorial practice, coming up next.

Marsha Bradfield: I think that’s a good suggestion, Tina.

Hillary Murphy: Yes, well, you see, what you’re saying makes me think about just how much we take for granted the *primacy* of the reader as an *author* in critical discussion of authorship—at least in academic discussions on this subject—today. I’m thinking, for example, art school culture. A great deal of effort is invested in cultivating and refining subjective *response* as a form of critical and creative *reading*. This occurs, for example, as emerging artists and designers realise artistic outcomes through collaborative working practices—by *interpreting* and *responding* to each other’s points of view through their practice of co-creation. In fact, *responsive understanding* is the core premise for art school critique, as a central practice in art school education.

KK Lin: But, you know, um, this isn’t an easy author-position to inhabit as a *student*. Our theory tutors tell us over and over again from BA to MA that the author is a *fiction*. But then, when it comes to studio practice, to our *own* authorial practice—and especially the *marking* and *assessment* of this practice—it’s our individual authorship that counts. Trying to get collaborative work assessed is a nightmare.²⁸ So I guess I’m fingering a disconnection between theory and practice?²⁹ Does that make sense?




lonely collaborator @LCollaborator

Has capitalism co-opted the death of the author? #diacamp

Expand

now




Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai

MC: How does DA take and work with 2 contrasting POVs =

Expand

35m



Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai

acknowledge authorial contributions while contesting the author as a singular position.

Expand Reply Delete Favorite

35m

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Maeve Cutty:

Actually, KK, it does make sense—very good sense. And, in my experience, it applies to tutors as well. We scholars, it appears, often get quite comfy with just theorising about complex things like subjectivity, agency and authorship. What we should be doing is trying to reconfigure the conditions of practice by attempting to evolve alternatives to some of these entrenched assumptions and practices.³⁰ On the other hand, and in fairness to myself and my colleagues, we don’t have many choices when our institutions are using assessment schemes to champion individual autonomy, and in the process pitting learners against learners and faculty against faculty as they compete for grades or grants. Hardly seems right, does it?

Phil Hind:

Valid point, Maeve. And then we must add to this that there are trends afoot to make knowledge the property of the institutions where it is produced. It recalls Ella’s reference earlier today to the Bauhaus students not having rights to their own, collectively produced work.

Shadworth Dyson:

Yes, well, as I near retirement, this is perhaps less a concern for me than it should be for emerging authors working within institutions, because in the future, in addition to contending with skyrocketing fees and shrinking pay, Phil is quite right say that it could well be that knowledge generated by students and faculty in educational institutions and beyond will be expropriated and sold off.

Krista Wiseman:

It’s the logic of capitalism—marketisation to generate revenue streams as our temporary age of austerity becomes a permanent condition.

Shadworth Dyson:

And what would this mean in the case of the author as reader? Pushed to an extreme, could we find ourselves in a double bind, our authorship expropriated, charged to ‘read’ whatever it is that we once produced?

Allison Jones:

Maeve, as interested as I am in this discussion, it occurs to me that we’ve drifted away from authorship *qua* authorship and I’m wondering—

Maeve Cutty:

Actually, Allison, I think you’re wrong about that—I think we’re right on target. What ‘bout this? Dialogic art is an approach to cultural production intent on exploring authorship *qua* authorship, rooted in contradictions like the ones we’ve flushed out through our discussion—

John Johnson:

Okay, slow down—could you repeat this, please?

Maeve Cutty:

Well, to phrase it as a question for the list, John, we might ask how the authorial practice of dialogic art takes up and works with two contrasting points of view. For starters, there is the challenge of acknowledging the authorial contributions of the living, breathing, sovereign authors—I’ve lost count of how many times I’ve said that in the last half hour, but anyway—the living, breathing, sovereign authors who contribute to the dialogues that bring dialogic artworks into being—

Phil Hind:

If I may, Maeve, there is also the importance of recognising that the authors’ activity composes a much broader network of authorial practice, a network that is subject to a whole host of terms and conditions, many of which are *beyond the control of individual author-agents* .

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Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai24m

MC: DA as authorship qua authorship – evolve T/P of cult pro – sensitive to complex/contingen relations in dynamic relation. #diacamp


Expand Reply Delete Favorite



lonely collaborator @LCollaboratornow

Yes—circulation and redistribution of value.


Expand Reply Delete Favorite



Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai23m

JJ: What does the artist of dialogic art actually do? What claim to they have on DAW? #diacamp

Expand



Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai22m

Speaking of redistribution and circulation – CW invites MC to extend discussion of authorship into the next session.

Expand Reply Delete Favorite



Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai10m

Barcamp claps. #diacamp

Expand

Maeve Cutty: Right you are, Phil, which is the other side of the rub. So then, Allison, when I say our discussion is right on target, what I mean is that the first step in engaging and working through all these distinct points of view in dialogic art is to understand *what they are* and the *ways they conflict*.

For Foucault, this involved identifying the author function as well as many other aspects through which authorship occurs, including tradition and citation, whilst Barthes contested the ‘Author-God’ as a variation of the universal subject, which then meant introducing the idea of reader as author. But, when all is done and dusted, what dialogic art seems to be calling for is something of a mixed economy of author-positions, isn’t it? An economy that acknowledges an even more expanded understanding, one that charts multiple registers of authorial activity, when you consider voices, textuality, mechanisms of publication, dissemination, citation and so on and so forth. I suppose what I’m proposing, really, is that by exploring authorship *qua* authorship, dialogic art might be able to evolve a theory and practice of authorial production with the ability to be more sensitive to all these complex and contingent registers in dynamic relation.

[The timer rings.]

Ella Stone: As you’ve been speaking, Maeve, I’ve been thinking quietly to myself how exciting it would be if, for instance, one of the respondents in *Take Care of Yourself* claimed it as an artistic outcome. *Oui*? Not as participation in Calle’s project, but as an artwork in their body of practice, with their rejoinder in the dialogue linking with others to compose a shared artistic process and outcome.

John Johnson: Okay, but look. I’m beginning to get the feeling that there’s a question sitting in the middle of the room like the proverbial elephant: ‘What does the artist of dialogic art actually do?’ And what *claim* to the artwork do they have, if they acknowledge it as radically distributed and contingent?

Christian Wiseman: What claim do they have? Shouldn’t we instead be asking what *responsibility* they have to the artwork and the other artists—the other interlocutors—involved?

Tina Wiseman: Well, this comes onto our contribution, doesn’t it, Christian.

Christian Wiseman: It does indeed. Now Maeve, you spoke in the final part of our lunchtime chat about the *second* authorial figure that Barthes proposes in his essay. In addition to the *reader as author*, he also recommends the artist as ‘*scriptor*’.³¹ It occurs to me that, as we’ve run out of time in this session and what you were saying has, in my view, real credence for dialogic art, and as Tina and Marsha and I will sit in conversation next, perhaps you would like to join us in discussing this author position at this time.

Maeve Cutty: Well, that’s a very nice invitation, Christian, and I should like that very much. Thank you for remembering this and finding a way to accommodate it in your discussion. Very kind.

Marsha Bradfield: And thank you, Maeve and Phil, for feedback back on your lunchtime exchange. Your proposition that dialogic art might explore authorship *qua*

authorship is not something I’ve been able to put into words, but could
incredibly useful for conceptualising this fledgling practice.
[Barcamp claps.]

¹Seán Burke, *The Death and Return of the Author: Criticism and Subjectivity in Barthes, Foucault and Derrida*, 3rd ed. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008), 14. For a provocative take on the ‘origins’ of the post-structuralist subject, see Burke’s discussion on the impact that Edmund Husserl’s phenomenological thinking had on Barthes, Foucault and Derrida, resulting in their reaction against the subject, ‘A phenomenological training had taught them that the subject was too powerful, too sophisticated a concept to be simply bracketed; rather subjectivity was something to be annihilated’.

²Roland Barthes, ‘The Death of the Author,’ in *Theories of Authorship*, ed. John Caughie (London, Boston and Henley: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981), 211.

³Burke, *The Death and Return of the Author*, 25.

⁴Barthes, ‘The Death of the Author,’ 209.

⁵Burke, *The Death and Return of the Author*, 21.

⁶Barthes, ‘The Death of the Author,’ 213.

⁷Lisa Ede and Andrea A. Lunsford, ‘Collabroation and Concepts of Authorship’, *PMLA* 116, no.2 (March 2001), 355.

⁸William H. Gass, *Habitations of the Word* (New York: Simon and Shuster, 1995), 265.

⁹Jeffery T. Nealon, *Alterity Politics: Ethics and Performative Subjectivity* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1998), 33.

¹⁰*Michel Foucault, ‘What is an Author?’ in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rainbow (New York: Pantheon), 108-120. Foucault’s ‘author function’ aims to explore what, in addition to an author (the authorial subject) authors a text. On Foucault’s view, authorship is best described as a function of discourse. His ‘author function’ goes beyond simply displacing the authorial subject—the author as a person, ‘Author–God’ or otherwise. Authorship expands into a ‘mode of existence, circulation and functioning of certain discourses within society’. This locates the author in relation to issues of attribution, including copyright, authentication and origin in the case of what Foucault calls the ‘founders of discursivity’. He gives the examples of Freud and Marx, whose influence outstripped their authored works, with their perspectives also opening up ‘the possibilities and the rules for the formation of other texts’, which have, in time, coalesced into discourses.

¹¹Ibid., 117.

¹²Gass, *Habitations of the Word*, 338.

¹³Ibid., 266.

¹⁴Simon Watt-Millne, conversation with the author, The Courtauld Gallery, London, UK, February 10, 2012.

¹⁵Foucault, ‘What is an Author?’ 108.

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹John Trimbur, ‘Agency and the Death of the Author: A Partial Defense of Modernism’, *jac* 20 no 2 (2000) 286-288.

²⁰Ibid., 289.

²¹Ibid., 296. See Trimbur for a useful discussion of authorial agency in the wake of the author. In Trimbur’s words: ‘[We] need the notion of the author... as a vital point to organize around, in writers’ guilds, unions, congresses, cooperation’s and other associations of self-management. In late capitalist society, the author still figures as a key site of self-defense within market relations, a self-formed position of struggle to control the conditions and products of work.’

²²Barthes, ‘The Death of the Author’, 210.

²³Foucault, ‘What is an Author?’ 112.

²⁴Barthes, ‘The Death of the Author,’ 209. Barthes writes, ‘The explanation of a work is always sought in the man or woman who produced it, as if it were the end, through the more or less transparent allegory of fiction, the voice of a single person, the author ‘confiding’ in us.

²⁵Foucault, ‘What is an Author?’, 102. Foucault writes, ‘In writing, the point is not to manifest or exalt the acto writing, nor is it to pin a subject within language; it is rather a question of creating a space in which the writing subject constantly disappears.

²⁶Barthes, ‘The Death of the Author’, 209.

²⁷Ibid., 212.

²⁸Paul MacGee, interview by the author, London, May 25, 2011. When it comes to the challenges of assessing collaborative art practice in art colleges, consider the example of Paul MacGee and Lewis McGuffie. Having collaborated over the course of their undergraduate degree, Chelsea College of Art nevertheless insisted that they write separate theses and be given separate marks when graduating in 2009. Their practical work was, however, jointly assessed. Not only does this suggest a double standard between the theoretical and practical aspects of the curriculum, it indicates dissonance between promoting collaboration in creative practice on the one hand and the institution’s policies for assessing this on the other.

²⁹Ede and Lunsford, ‘Collaboration and Concepts of Authorship’, 357.

³⁰Ibid., 356.

³¹Barthes, ‘The Death of the Author’, 211. In addition to the reader as author, another author position is born in Barthes’s essay—that of the ‘modern scriptor’. Barthes describes their remit as follows: ‘His only power is to mix writings, to counter the ones with the others, in such a way as never to rest on any one of them. Did he wish to express himself? He ought at least to know that the inner “thing” he thinks to “translate” is itself only a ready–formed dictionary, its words only explainable through other words, and so on indefinitely’.

Ethical Vectors for Dialogic Art

1. **The authors of dialogic artworks are all those people ‘directly’ involved in the artworks’ production** (via decision making and other creative acts). The **artist-authors** are those who take responsibility for this production. Any of the authors can claim authorship for their contributions (creative, organisational, reflective, practical, etc.). Both the specifics of these contributions and the authors’ direct involvement are subject to negotiation with the artist-authors.
2. **Dialogic artworks are composed of their authors’ utterances.** But these artworks also seek to acknowledge that authors and their utterances are not coextensive. As authored expressions, utterances exist in the world independently of their authors. But they also tie back to their authors and are the fruits of their labour. Exploring the utterance’s dual status as both authored by and distinct from their authors is central to dialogic art.
3. **Like all utterances, those in dialogic art are always co-authored.** As concrete expressions of intersubjectivity, they are thresholds across self and other. Dialogic artworks explore this relation through their composition.
4. **Dialogic artworks tend to unfold in stages.** These artworks often spread across both an event and its representation. The representational aspect of a dialogic artwork should strive to acknowledge the ways in which it is partial in its representation, with this aspect also making explicit the terms of its editorial process and its performative effect: how the form or forms of this representation shape its content and vice versa.
5. **The utterances generated in a dialogic artwork are shared resources and should be available for use by all the authors.** Any of the authors can use the utterances for their own purpose. But this usage should take into consideration the aspirations expressed in these ethical vectors.
6. **Artist-authors are responsible for their decision making in dialogic artworks.** This is because as authorial subjects they are able to respond in various ways. The practice of dialogic art seeks to innovate representational strategies for making this authorial response manifest in dialogic artworks.
7. **In addition to the artwork, the practice of dialogic art creates relations among the authors.** This intersubjectivity is a key concern in dialogic art, with its significance being on par with the dialogic artwork that aims to explore it. In the same way that authors and their utterances are contingent without being coextensive, so too the intersubjectivity generated through the practice of dialogic art and its representation in dialogic artworks is also contingent without being coextensive. Balancing the needs and ambitions of the authors’ relationships with the needs and ambitions of the artwork as an exploration of this intersubjectivity is an ongoing process in dialogic art.

Fig. 11.0

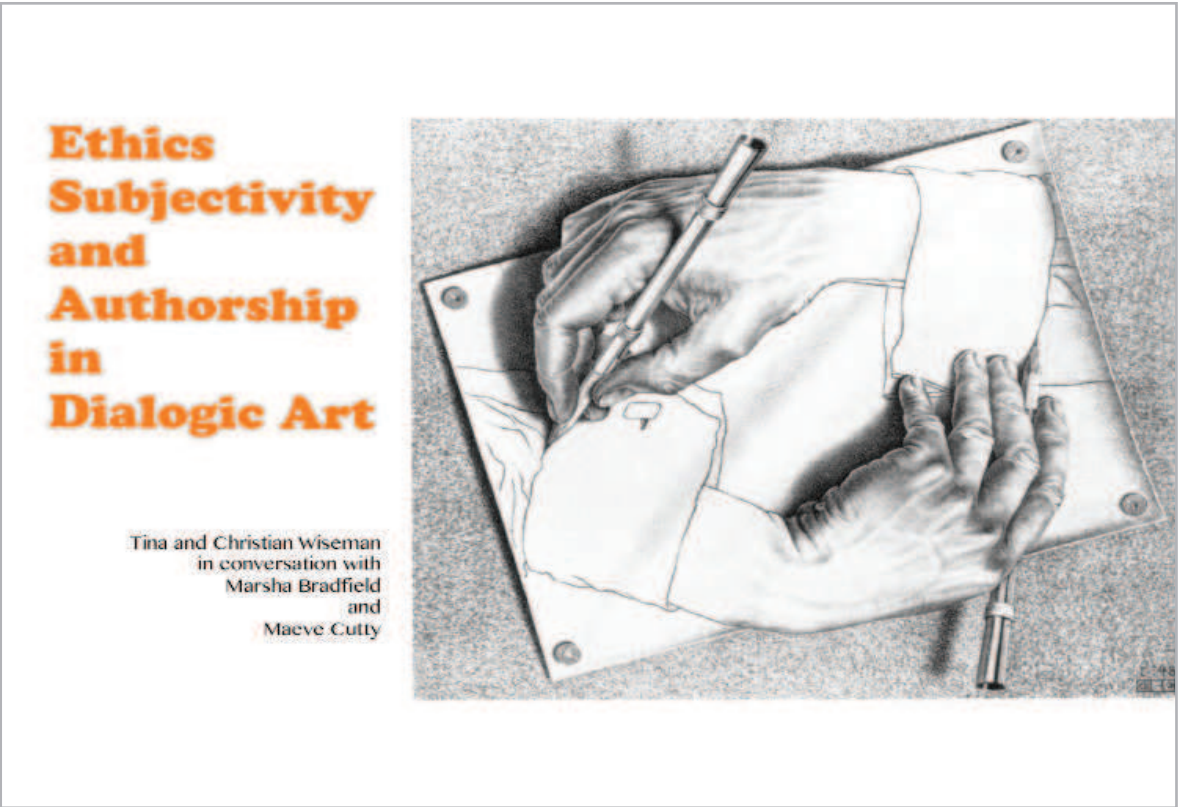


Fig. 11.1

Marsha Bradfield: In our second-to-last barcamp session, I’ll be sitting in conversation with the Wisemans and Maeve. We’ll explore the intersection of subjectivity, ethics and authorship in dialogic art. Now, I should say that we’d planned on this being a double contribution. As things have turned out, it will be shorter than this. So I’ll set the timer for forty-five minutes and we’ll see how we get on.

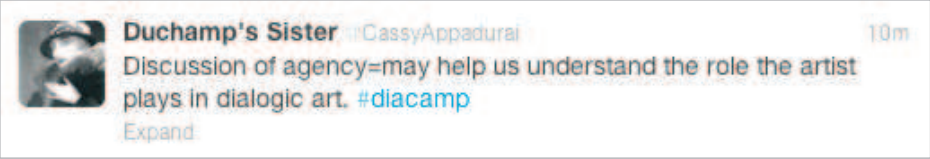
I’ll begin by connecting this conversation to two lines of thought that have ebbed and flowed over the course of today. You’ll recall Tina’s suggestion that we take authorial agency as our point of departure. In my view, exploring this in terms of *practice*, and most immediately what this *agency* might involve in the context of dialogic art, seems crucial, if we are, as David insisted, to begin contouring the artist’s role in this particular approach to dialogue-based contemporary art practice. Now for me, there is a strong connection here with subjectivation—to the sense that in addition to authoring something, authorship also authors *someone*, or plural subjects, author-subjects. But before considering the relation between agency and subjectivation, let’s situate this exchange with a few words about your art practice, Tina and Christian. I think it exemplifies an interesting approach to dialogic art.

Tina Wiseman: Yes, thank you, Marsha. Over twenty years of working together, Christian and I have evolved something like a *parasitic* practice of collaboration.

Christian Wiseman: Symbiotic.

Tina Wiseman: Instead of initiating our own projects, we work on existing ones.

Christian Wiseman: Why start *more* projects when there are so many in process, the vast majority of which are underdeveloped?



- Tina Wiseman:

We collaborate in compliance with the terms established with or by the other co-authors. But we also pursue our *own agenda*, using the larger project to host our activities.
- Christian Wiseman:

‘Pursuing our own agenda’, as Tina put it, means that we create a body of work using the project’s resources without necessarily involving the other collaborators—at least not directly, as first-order authors. The symbiosis occurs when our work informs the project overall.
- Tina Wiseman:

In the case of Marsha’s project, *Art Idol 2010*, we worked with her to develop *Some Ethical Vectors for Dialogic Art*. (Fig 11.0) At the same time, to our own ends, we generated a series of photo-based artworks from stills that Marsha made of the project’s video footage.
- Marsha Bradfield:

Before discussing these outcomes, would you like to say something more about your parasitic/symbiotic approach as authorial practice? I find this fascinating.
- Tina Wiseman:

Yes, thank you, Marsha. We’re very transparent in our designs to take projects we’re involved in elsewhere through what I suppose should be described, in keeping with the catch phrases we’ve heard recurrently today, as authorship that is ‘distributed and contingent’. Yes, we strive to be transparent about our intentions; but no, our parasitic relation to the project doesn’t always make for an easy working relationship with the other collaborators. Yet it *can* be a generative one when what we produce puts the project in dialogue with *itself* in ways that would not otherwise occur, in keeping with its initial remit.

We’ve spoken today about dialogic art with regards to boundary objects, cusps, thresholds, collaboration, collectivity, matrixes, networks and, of course, dialogue. In contrast, we organise our practice through *vectors*.

Now, I supposed you’re all familiar with a ‘vector’ as something—a quantity—that has a direction as well as a magnitude? In mathematics, ‘vectors’ can determine the position of one point relative to another in Euclidean space.¹ The same goes for our practice. Our agenda is to focus on aspects of a collaborative project in *relation* to each other and to their immediate context. This collaboration, then, is located within a context. what Shadworth would term a ‘sociolinguistic horizon’ composed of social, political, cultural, economic and other kinds of conditions.
- John Johnson:

Okay, so to extrapolate from what you’re saying, your dual approach of both collaborating *on* a project and taking it *elsewhere* through your related but also independent activity is an example of *vectoring*?
- Christian Wiseman:

Yes, that’s right. The relation between these two forms of collaborative engagement is never static; recomposition is constant. In fact, it’s this ongoing process of negotiation that motors our practice, as we develop ways of *evolving* our independent collaboration at the same time as we’re *evolving* the broader one—and evolving within the broader one, too.
- Tina Wiseman:

This unfolds through ongoing response—ours and the other collaborators’ response to the project—including our contingent body of work. Yes, we seek feedback on this at regular intervals with the caveat that we may or may not



incorporate it into what we produce. I suppose I should mention that we also use the term ‘vector’ in another way, in keeping with its secondary definition.

Christian Wiseman: I don’t like this definition, but Tina does—so that’s why we use it.

Tina Wiseman: It’s in this secondary definition that our ‘parasitic’ sensibility *really* comes to the fore. As well as a mathematical term, ‘vector’ is the name of a tick or insect—a carrier—that transmits a disease from one plant or an animal to another.² There is a critical dimension of our practice that turns on this idea of spreading *dis-ease*. We bite someone or something and this creates an itch that has to be scratched. This itch in Marsha’s research has been around the authorial ethics of dialogic art.

Cassy Appadurai: That doesn’t sound very ethical to me. Ethics are about what one *should* or *ought* to do, aren’t they? Good and right actions that *should* be pursued and bad or evil ones that *ought* to be avoided?³ Biting someone or something and infecting them with ‘dis-ease’ sounds harmful.

Tina Wiseman: What about inoculations? Exposure to disease in small quantities builds resistance and prevents sickness.

Christian Wiseman: I don’t think we’ve made quite clear what we mean by *ethics*, as compared with *morality*. The word ‘moral’ comes from the word ‘custom’—as in ‘mores’.⁴

Tina Wiseman: Christian, we don’t have much time and everyone’s tired. Could you try to stay on topic?

Christian Wiseman: Yes, but if you don’t mind me saying so, Tina, ‘moral’ connotes generally accepted standards of goodness and rightness that are based on cultural norms, as compared with ‘ethical’, which refers to fair and honest behaviour in a more specific context—think about ‘professional ethics’, by way of example. Although social mores play a role, ethics are more immediately beholden to the terms of engagement and conditions of possibility in a particular field. By way of example, ethics in medicine differ from those in business⁵—and don’t we all know it? Yes, Tina, I know.

The key point here is that ‘ethics’ calls up a whole range of issues in the practice of art. If we accept Allison’s view that art is extra-disciplinary—that it *goes beyond* disciplines, then where does this leave art when it comes to an ethical code?

John Johnson: You’re saying that, if art is *extra-disciplinary*, it’s also *extra-ethical*?

Christian Wiseman: No, that’s not right. I’m saying the ethics of artistic practice is more ambiguous than in medicine, teaching, law or other more regulated disciplines. The key point here is that it’s really up to individual practitioners to work out the ethical basis for their practice.

Allison Jones: If I may come in on this, Christian. Art research as a hybrid approach is even *more* complex, especially when it involves people—sovereign others—as in the case of dialogic art. A seam in Marsha’s research has been preoccupied with aligning the principles of human-subjects research, which underpins her PhD as institutionalised enquiry with the practicalities of working artistically and collaboratively.

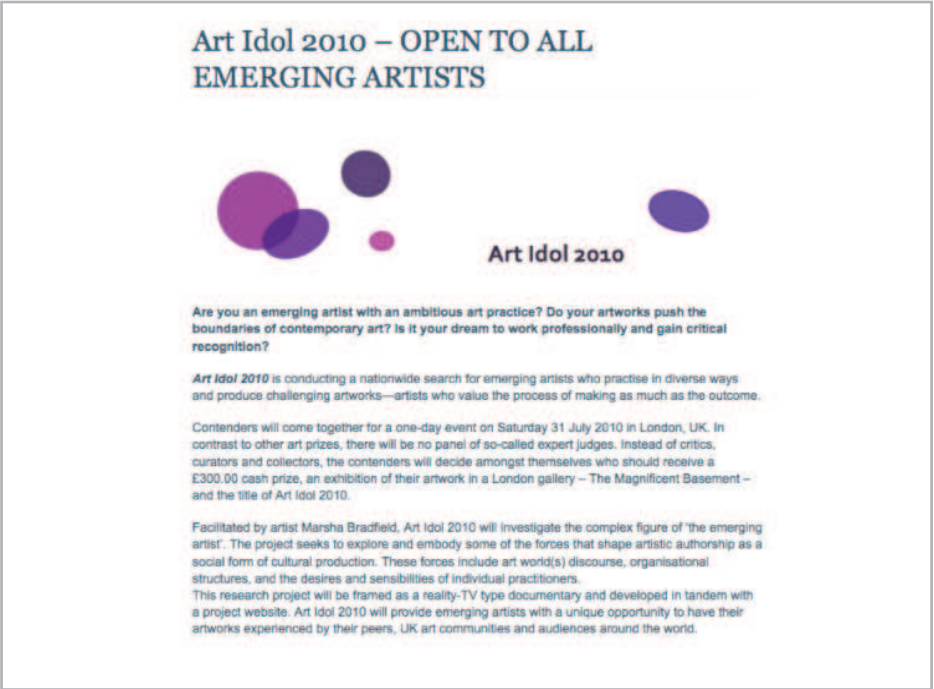


Fig. 11.2



Fig. 11.3

Marsha Bradfield: And if I may add, Allison, this model of research emerged from a post-World War Two commitment to research that prioritises the rights of the human subject over that of the research—

Allison Jones: In response to the atrocities committed by Nazi physicians in the name of research.⁶

Christian Wiseman: Yes, there’s no question is very, *very* important, but it’s not always easy to translate into practice—into action, is it? And this is partly because it’s difficult, isn’t it, as Allison said, difficult to anticipate all the ethical and other considerations in advance of making an artwork, owing to the creative process being one that’s dynamic, a process of becoming.

Marsha Bradfield: I think this is especially so in collaborative practice. It’s rarely the case, in my experience, that something is determined in advance and then executed as planned. Things *invariably* change, with these changes directly impacting the project, as well as those involved. This is really to make the obvious but nevertheless important point that the dialogic artworks I’ve been involved with unfold in unexpected ways, often in response to changing life circumstances. People move, have babies; funding appears at the last minute or it doesn’t or—

David Rooksby: There’s a case of creative differences and the band breaks up.

Marsha Bradfield: That’s another very real possibility, as coordinating collaboration is challenging—demanding, for sure, but also very rewarding—when, that is, it manages to meet and accommodate the needs of those involved. But coming back to Tina and Christian’s collaborative role in *Art Idol 2010*, something they were able to help me understand is that certain considerations are *recurrent*. And it was through identifying these patterns that we were able to formulate general principles for good practice in dialogic art.

Tina Wiseman: Marsha, why don’t you offer a little background to these vectors? Perhaps say why for you exploring the intersection of ethics, authorship and subjectivity in dialogic art is so important to your practice.

Marsha Bradfield: Well, very briefly, I met the Wisemans when I was trying to make sense of *Art Idol 2010*. This was a large-scale, long-term project that brought together eight emerging London-based artists and me, along with two documentarians and a small army of support staff for a one-day event. Now, initiated through an open call, *Art Idol 2010* announced itself as concerned with a particular figure in the London art world—the emerging artist. And I’ve got a slide, here, of the open call. (Fig. 11.2) but ‘the emerging artist’ was only one of the project’s concerns. Another was its organisation in the form of a contest.

So over approximately eight hours, the artist-contenders decided amongst themselves which one of them should receive £300.00 and an exhibition. The event was videotaped, as were the one-on-one interviews with the artist-contenders before, after and during the day. (Fig. 11.3)

Now *Art Idol 2010* will eventually come together in an installation, as the most comprehensive expression of the project to date. It will include my edits of the documentation informed by the genre of reality TV, as it was this



Fig. 11.4



Fig. 11.5

approach to cultural production that inspired the project’s contest format. *Art Idol 2010* evolved in response to the possibility of creating a dialogic artwork that critically explored this genre. And here is an image of the constituency in the throes of the one-day event. (Fig. 11.4)

So in most reality-TV scenarios—and we can think of *School of Saatchi* as an art world example—a panel of experts puts the contestants through their paces via various tasks and trials. But I wanted to organise *Art Idol 2010* in a way that reconfigured this hierarchy by creating a more horizontal one. In this case, the temporary constituency not only decided amongst themselves *who* should be *Art Idol 2010*—so, who should take the title and the prizes—but also *how* this decision—or, in this case, decisions—should be made.

Now, speaking of decisions, I should also mention that *Art Idol 2010* generated nearly forty hours of video footage in addition to a wealth of research, emails, submissions, legal contracts, photo documentation, artworks and an exhibition at the Red Gallery on Rivington Street in London in the summer of 2011, which was an important outcome of this one-day decision-making event. I won’t say much more about this exhibition, except that it brought together artworks authored by all the artist-contenders, and me, of course. I have some slides of the installation. (Fig. 11.5-11.6) And I have included a copy of the press release in your barcamp packs. (See A.3)

Alright now, having said all that, assuming that Tina and Christian are agreeable, I would like to use this opportunity to talk about the challenges I’m facing in collating all this material, as these are very much ongoing.

David Rooksby:

Two years after the initial event?

Marsha Bradfield:

Well, I’ve been trying to figure out how to produce a dialogic artwork as an outcome of *Art Idol 2010* through an authorial process that is sensitive to the ethical dimension of co-authorial practice. And in taking up this challenge, I’ve immersed myself in discussions and commentary on transparency, self-organisation, roles and goals, networks, representation and self-other relations to support my broader practice of collaboration. When it comes to my research into dialogic art, I should mention that *Art Idol 2010* is an important practical element of my PhD.

You know, for me, one of the fascinating outcomes of this project was that I was not at all prepared for is that it would produce so many important—wonderful—personal relationships. The intensity of *Art Idol 2010* proved a kind of bonding experience for many of those—for us—involved. In other words, we, the co-authors of this project, now have history. I learned a great deal about the artist-contenders as people through their often revealing interviews and the drama of the contest. (Fig. 11.7) I expect they learned a lot about me too. I have collaborated with some on subsequent projects⁷ and all of them remain friends. This friendship then means that an additional layer of consideration *above* and *beyond* what is *always* at stake in representing an other or others has complicated the project in ways that I had not anticipated. And this made the collation all the more difficult to realise.



Fig. 11.6

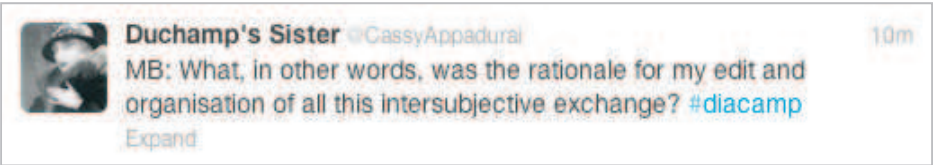


Fig. 11.7

John Johnson: Okay, but, look, if you’re worried about *misrepresenting* the other co-authors—the artist-contenders, as you call them—why don’t you edit the footage together? Or give it to them to edit—or someone else? Or why not show all forty hours of it?

Marsha Bradfield: Oh I’ve thought about these and other strategies. Showing all the footage is antithetical to reality-TV-style editing, which favours extreme condensation. You know, a week becomes an hour, in this genre. So editing the project together isn’t practical, and nor was it part of my initial agreement with the artist-contenders, which was set down in their legal contract. Now, I should mention that another suggestion was that I turn all forty hours of footage over to an editor and ask him or her to organise it on my behalf.⁸ But absolving myself of this authorial responsibility didn’t seem to me to be the solution, either.

David Rooksby: Because?

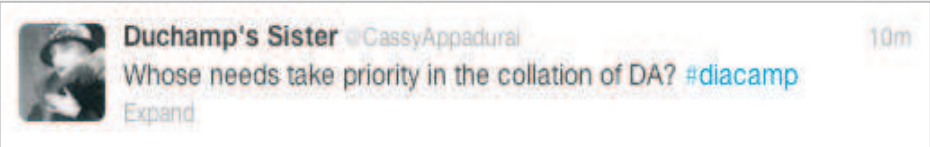
Marsha Bradfield: Well to begin with, through editing the footage I aimed to improve what Shadworth earlier termed *utterance literacy*. Though I didn’t, until today, have the language to describe this, I think Shadworth gets very close to my commitment to developing an adroitness at combining utterances in ways that draw attention to their contingent significance as they compose dialogic works of art.

So, as an artist-researcher attempting to collate this project, there was also the challenge of how to locate *myself* as I responded to the wide range of utterances that link together *Art Idol 2010* as a project diffused across time and space. And, in addition to determining the formal and artistic considerations in my approach, I became caught up in the ethical basis for my collation. What, in other words, was the *rationale* for my edit and organisation of all this intersubjective exchange?

Okay, so this leads into the second reason why surrendering the footage was untenable. Negotiating it through a process of decision-making, which was self-consciously ethical, to the extent that it acknowledged ethics as a valid basis for both the practice of dialogic art and its realisation through dialogic artworks, struck me as an important aspect of the research. Christina Allen’s name for the knowledge produced through this experience is ‘ethical wisdom’.⁹ It’s a deep understanding of how to engage and *action*—take action—that develops through practice.

Phil Hind: Ah yes. Pierre Bourdieu would term this a ‘disposition’ that develops through a subject’s recursive response to their life-world.¹⁰

Shadworth Dyson: Yes, well, this thought also occurred to me, and I expect Bakhtin would describe what you’ve identified, Phil, as a ‘disposition’, as something like an ‘unsystematisable responsive action’, because it impels us to respond in ways that are particular and varied as opposed to transcendent—in other words, *ethical* in contrast to *moral*.¹¹



Marsha Bradfield: You’re right, Shadworth, that decisions are always situated and specific—responsive. It’s also true that they’re made based on *some* consideration, which is something that I feel, as a practitioner and in the case of *Art Idol 2010*, I need to surface and unpack. And this came into focus for me when I realised just how important it was to me to collate this project *myself*. And moreover, how important it was to me to do so in a way that was *sensitive* to it being networked across friendships, the demands or research and the importance of this collation coming together as a dialogic artwork, despite not really knowing what would distinguish it as such, as a dialogic work of art.

KK Lin: Well, I hope today has helped!

Marsha Bradfield: It certainly has. In fact—


Allison Jones: Excuse me, Marsha, but I have to say this. When it comes to intersubjective relations, I keep telling you there are limits to accommodating the perceived needs, desires, ambitions, concerns and other considerations of the artist-contenders—let alone all the other co-authors involved. What about the documentarians? Or the assistants who helped out on the day? Or the owner of the property where the event took place who gave you the space for free, Marsha?

Phil Hind: So we’re back to bounding dialogic art and the pitfalls of infinite regress and progress.

Allison Jones: Yes, and the model that Marsha seems to be plumping for—against my advice, I should add—prioritises her perceived ethical obligations to the first-order interlocutors above all else. But what about the *others*—and especially the second-order ones? In what ways does dialogic art consider the needs and desires of those *encountering* your collation—as either an artwork and/or practice-based research?¹² And what about the needs and desires of *Art Idol 2010*? What about doing justice to it as a contemporary work of art? If I’ve said it once, I’ve said it a thousand times, the artwork as an outcome of the research process should take priority over everything else, within reason, of course. What Marsha should be concerned with is making the most interesting artwork that she can.

John Johnson: Okay, so you’re saying the means justify the ends, right? But you’re also saying that the outcome of an artwork takes priority over its practice. And, look, if I understand you correctly, you’re *also* implying that the ethical dimension of artistic practice isn’t an *interesting* subject for artistic exploration?

Allison Jones: Not exactly. But it’s hard enough to produce a compelling and provocative work of contemporary art, let alone a dialogic artwork in keeping with the huge range of criteria that we’ve identified today, taking into consideration the challenge of acknowledging the labour and the reciprocity, drawing out the *dialogueness of dialogue*, finding ways to make the socially produced character of the art explicit in the form of the work—in the artwork, I mean—and ensuring that it meets the requirements of research. I could go on and on and on. My point is why should we encumber the practice of dialogic art with added expectations?




Duchamp's Sister

@CassyAppadurai

B right back. #diacamp

Expand

10m




Duchamp's Sister

@CassyAppadurai

Am I the only one tweeting these days? #diacamp

Expand

10m




Ad Man Can

@DavidRooksby

You're the Energizer Bunny in tweeland. We're all rung out. #diacamp

Expand

10m



TheJargonBuster

@TheJargonBuste1

My laptop is dying. #diacamp

Expand

↩ Reply

🗑 Delete

★ Favorite

4s

Marsha Bradfield: With all due respect, Allie, the co-authors of *Art Idol 2010* aren't your friends and, this isn't your art practice—though I'll be the first to admit that it's evolved through our collaborative research in important ways. The point is not simply to develop an ethical basis for practice.

You know, one of the key challenges in the case of *Art Idol 2010* recalls our discussion earlier concerning *genre*. The project takes its direction from reality-TV, right? And as a discursive format, this worked wonders for ramping up *Art Idol 2010*'s 'dialogic disposition' in the one-day event. But the format doesn't easily accommodate the human-subjects research ethics that underpins the project as *research*. You know, one of the principles of these ethics concerns the *research subjects' rights*. These take priority over those of the research.¹³

Allison Jones: Yes, of course. But this becomes problematic when you compromise the *researcher's* rights to make interesting artworks because they may *offend* some of those involved. But don't let that stop you, Marsha. Do continue.

Cassy Appadurai: Marsha, were you even *researching* the artist-contenders? Were they research subjects? Why would human-subjects research ethics even apply in the case of *Art Idol 2010* ? That's simply not clear, at least not in light of your description.

Marsha Bradfield: It's a fascinating question. I would say they were subjects in the research—as was I—which I think we can distinguish from their being *actual* research subjects. By this I mean that we were all part of this project, all *subjectivated* in the process. We were all observing each other, in keeping with the genre of reality TV. Granted, in some ways, *Art Idol 2010* was a kind of social experiment, albeit a collaborative one where the subjects together made the rules. But it was also a game, a competition, a networking event and a peer-to-peer critique, with the artist-contenders sharing their practice and receiving feedback. And, in my view, the project's plural identity is another example of what Shadworth earlier described in passing as the 'simultaneity of difference'. There were *multiple* interests at stake—*multiple* forms and functions and personalities—in play in the same frame.

David Rooksby: A boundary object.

Marsha Bradfield: Yes, but there's a catch.

David Rooksby: There always is. Don't keep us in suspense.

Marsha Bradfield: There is no question of the one-day event being a boundary object. But what about my editing the documentation and collating it into artwork outcomes? Granted, this doesn't make it any less of a boundary object in keeping with the way it's been discussed. But it does have consequences for how all the co-authors, including the artist-contenders, relate to the project's eventual collation. With every development in *Art Idol 2010*, I wonder how they will receive their representation as well as the project overall.

Allison Jones: I understand this concern, Marsha, but I think you take it too far—especially when it becomes an excuse for a boring artwork that fails to realise itself as an instance of reality TV because everyone is being so *nice* to each other. There’s no conflict, no drama, which is really the whole point of reality TV.

Cassy Appadurai: I’m confused. Are the artist-contenders, as you’ve been calling them, the main audience for this research? Maybe ‘audience’ isn’t the best word, but are you collating *Art Idol 2010* for this constituency?

Marsha Bradfield: That’s another good question. Yes and no. They are one constituency and an important one, owing to their having co-authored the event that the collation aims to re-present.

Phil Hind: Yes, well, fine. The truth is, of course, that many of these issues—representation, objectivity, subject and researcher vulnerability and participant observation—have been addressed in sociology and anthropology.

Marsha Bradfield: Good point. In fact, social science Internet research has been especially useful to me in thinking about these things in the context of dialogic art. This seems a good time to turn to the working document, *Some Ethical Vectors for Dialogic Art*, which arose through my discussion with the Wisemans. Does everyone have a handout? (Fig.11.0) I should mention that this document is dynamic. It’s under erasure and will evolve with reflection-on-experience. It attempts to indicate the ethical complexity of practising dialogic art by observing it in some way without losing sight that, as such, it will necessarily need to be taken up and critically applied in response to the specific needs of practice. I find it useful to think of these vectors less as a contract and more as a set of *aspirations* for practicing this art in a self-consciously ethical way. We won’t have time to discuss this document in depth. But you’ll note the second vector attempts to differentiate between authors and their utterances.

Now, going back to Phil’s comment about social science research having useful resources, Internet research is preoccupied with the relation between someone’s online presence and their offline embodiment. I’ve been thinking about this as roughly analogous to the presence of those involved in *Art Idol 2010* as an event and their *recorded utterances* on the one hand, and their *real-world existence* as London-based emerging artists with feelings and futures on the other. You know, I often think of something expressed by researchers E. H. Basset and Kathleen O’Riordan about this relationship when they say, ‘There are no bodies online’.¹⁴ Instead of embodiment, there are all kinds of representations, with social media profile photos being a case in point. Do you think the same argument could be made in the case of video accounts like *Art Idol 2010*?

Maeve Cutty: Well in a way, this takes us to the textuality of traces, authorial traces, doesn’t it? For starters, you have these people, these artist-contenders. And then they come together and you document themdoing thier thing. I should say that, if Barthes’s ‘The Death of the Author’ has taught us anything, it’s not to conflate a representation—an utterance, I mean—with either *what* it’s describing or *who* is producing it.¹⁵

Tina Wiseman: Yes, someone has to author these utterances! And, as Phil made the point earlier in Maeve’s discussion, that *someone* is liable for their authorship and also to have rights to it—moral rights, copyright and so on and so forth. And that makes it political, does it not? *People* produced the utterances in *Art Idol 2010*—the artist-authors, Marsha and others.

Maeve Cutty: Hmm, well, Tina luv, according to vector number two in this working document, the utterances and the people who make them don’t overlap, do they? And I want to hold onto that point. But I also have something to say to Marsha. To be frank—and I don’t mean any offense here, Marsha—but the idea of a reality-TV project being used as a context for human-subject research sounds *ludicrous* to me—and it’s all the more ludicrous that the authors then became your friends. I’m sorry, luv, but I think Allie has a valid point. The genre of reality TV is premised on intersubjective drama. The audience sits back and watches as people behave in ways that palpably affect each other, and the result is some kind of ‘dialogic bonus’, as Clark would describe it, if he hadn’t stormed out of here in a huff. But in this genre, the ‘dialogic bonus’ is not much of a *bonus* for the participants, is it? Because these representations are rarely flattering and often downright embarrassing! As you yourself mentioned, Marsha, representing the other is difficult enough when all things are equal. Earlier today, someone used the word ‘vexed’—lovely word, isn’t it? So few letters, so much meaning. But my point is that this is definitely a ‘vexed’ subject, as any ethnographer or anthropologist—or any author, for that matter—would surely confirm. But to try and accomplish this representation on behalf of *friends*, whilst at the same time fulfilling the expectations of the *reality-TV genre*, of all things, and whilst also taking into consideration the ethics of human-subject research—all I can say is good luck with that! I’m sorry, Marsha, but, honestly, luv, something has to give. The contradictions are simply intractable.

David Rooksby: You know, for a bunch of creatives we’re not very, what’s the word, ‘creative’, are we! What were the Wisemans saying about their practice being parasitic/ symbiotic? Couldn’t this provide a directive for your collating *Art Idol 2010*, Marsha?

Maeve Cutty: Or the ‘author as scriptor’, perhaps. That’s an author-position Barthes recommends in the author’s wake—a kind of citation machine, remixing a text in the knowledge that the remix is a remix of earlier ones.¹⁶

Shadworth Dyson: It occurs to me in the case of your research, Marsha, that doing all this remixing *in an explicit way* would serve to reify the crux of Barthes’s argument—and Bakhtin’s, too—about the text being a ‘multi-dimensional space in which a variety of [traces,] none of them original, blend and clash’.

Maeve Cutty: Agreed! And this contrasts with—and *this is important*—a ‘line of words releasing a single “theological” meaning (the “message” of the Author-God)’.¹⁷ What I’m saying—what *we’re* saying—Marsha, in an admittedly convoluted way, is that, in my opinion, this approach *might* help you tackle your problem.

Wouldn't being a citation machine enable you to organise the utterances into some kind of collation, or account, more easily than this continual striving to be an ethics machine that gets hung up on trying to do the right thing?

John Johnson: Ah ha! So, what you're saying, Maeve, is that Barthes' theory provides a kind of *loophole*—a license to remix utterances—verbal, nonverbal and all the rest—with gleeful abandon. Is that it? What about Tina's concern that it's *people* who *author* these utterances? It's not, of course, that their utterances are necessarily original. As you say, we're all remixing material that's already been remixed. Or is it a case of authors and their utterances being interdependent. But this doesn't make what they author—what *we* author—any less important to us as authors, does it?

Maeve Cutty: All right, then, how 'bout this? In a spirit of compromise, perhaps the Wisemans' practice offers a third way—an approach that's not only possible but perhaps even desirable—one that moves *between* multiple author-positions. Using this technique, being a scriptor would not preclude Marsha from assuming other kinds of positions—including one that is concerned with *Art Idol 2010's* intersubjective relations from an explicitly ethical perspective. In fact, when I think about it, there could be a real advantage to approaching this project by occupying *multiple* vectors, Marsha. Sitting in the middle of this nexus, you would be in a good spot to think about your positions in relation—to really think through their distinct yet sometimes overlapping obligations, be they artistic, ethical and otherwise. Yes, now that I ponder it from the authorship *qua* authorship perspective, I can see this has potential to be quite an interesting aspect of dialogic art.

Marsha Bradfield: It's a provocative suggestion. You know more about textuality than I do, Maeve, but the Internet researchers I spoke about earlier, Basset and O'Riordan, consider three models of literary criticism with reference to online research—text as reflection of the author, text as object and text as reader response.¹⁸ And I'm thinking that, so far, we have focused primarily on the first two. So in a way, Allison is right to wonder about the second-order interlocutors. Why haven't we discussed them more explicitly today? And what obligations, ethical or otherwise, do dialogic artists have to this constituency?

Krista Wiseman: I think one of the reasons we've avoided this discussion is that we don't know what to call these people. 'Julia and Julian' have yet to catch on; 'viewer' always was an ocularcentric dud; and 'audience' smacks of performance. Shadworth's second-order interlocutor is the best option we have so far. But if authorial practice in dialogic art is concerned with authorship *qua* authorship, as Maeve names it, does it make more sense to speak of these people as second-order *authors*?

Maeve Cutty: Well now, let's see if we can sort this out. In the case of *Art Idol 2010*, the authorial response of these second-order authors stems from Marsha's response to the event, which she has collated into some kind of account, with herself responding to the artist-contenders' responses? However, from your



perspective, Marsha, it’s *your* edit, ripe with *your* intention—right? But this doesn’t tell us very much about how it will be received, does it? In fact, the only thing we can say for certain is that, however the artwork is received will be subject to subsequent remix through the responses of the second-order authors, this being in keeping with their own points of view. That was a long and winding road, but does it sound about right?

Brian Updike: Dead right, Maeve. The way I see it, an author has to take a position—or positions, often choosing the best one in light of their own knowledge and experience. This positionality is quite simply a condition of authorship. Once this has been established, the author’s challenge then becomes to engage the inherent contradictions of their position or positions—immanently. In the case of *Art Idol 2010*, this would mean working with these contradictions through the practice—the practice of producing a dialogic artwork as an edited or remixed account of the event. No doubt, the real challenge here is to develop an ethics of practice that resides *with* the artwork and emerges *through* the process of its becoming. Do you follow?

Tina Wiseman: Yes, of course—there is the project’s becoming and there is also the author’s becoming. Perfectly sensible.

Marsha Bradfield: Yes, Tina. And then there is also the authors’ *intersubjective* becoming through their co-authorship.

Tina Wiseman: Well, from my perspective, Marsha, Allison is right—but only partly right. She is right with regards to authorship as a space for self-expression. For even if what is expressed is a remix, it’s still the remix of flesh-and-blood, sovereign author who, regardless of all the obligations in which she finds herself enmeshed, is nevertheless responsible for her authorship. Where I disagree with Allison’s perspective, if indeed this is what she was saying, is that we should be producing artworks for second-order authors. I take issue with this idea for the simple reason that we can never really anticipate how they will respond. This applies equally to your representation of the artist-contenders in *Art Idol 2010*, Marsha. Despite your best intentions, they may *still* take umbrage. In fact, this calls up the whole problem with ‘The Golden Rule’ as an ethical basis for social engagement, artistic or otherwise.

Cassy Appadurai: You mean ‘Do unto others as you would have them do unto you’? 397

Tina Wiseman: Yes, of course. But this principle of reciprocity is flawed for two reasons. On the one hand, and from the perspective of the ‘you’ that it evokes, ‘The Golden Rule’ assumes that everyone is just like ‘you’, to the extent that what is good for ‘you’ is good for everyone else.¹⁹ And on the other hand, ‘The Golden Rule’ is flawed because it promotes *empathy*.²⁰

Krista Wiseman: And so it begins. You just couldn’t resist, could you? Please don’t. Not today. Not here.

Hillary Murphy: Please don’t what?

Krista Wiseman: My parents have this ongoing debate over whose philosophical perspective on self-other relations is more ethical as a general basis for their artistic practice: Bakhtin’s or Lévinas’s. Empathy is one of their trigger—

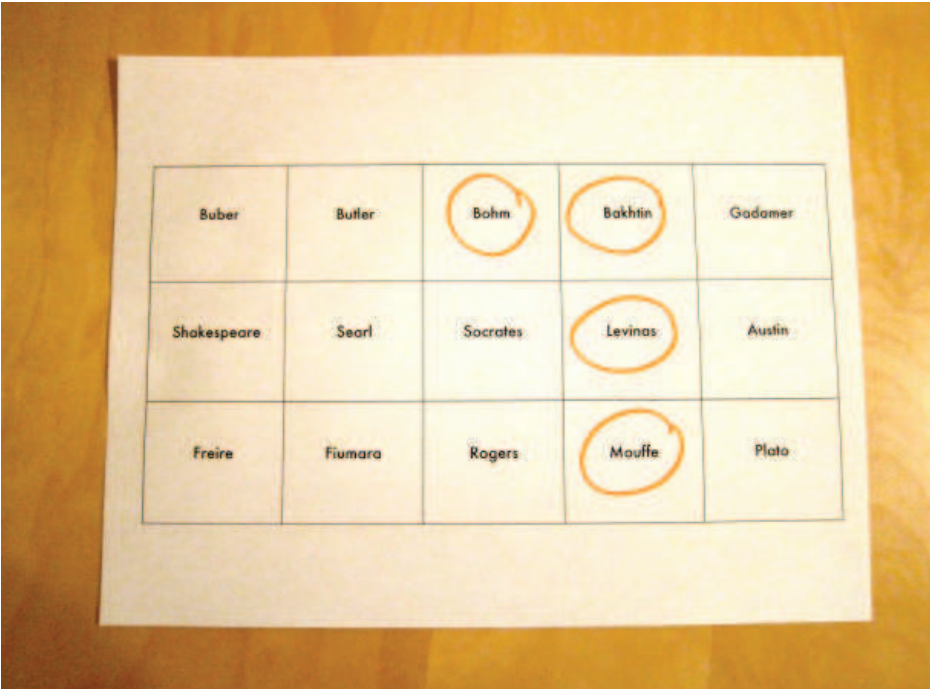
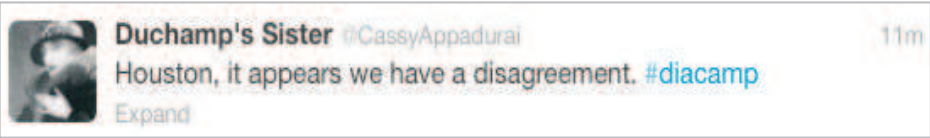


Fig. 11.8



KK Lin: Excuse me Krista, but BINGO!

Cassy Appadurai: No.

KK Lin: YES!

Cassy Appadurai: Tweets don't count.

KK Lin: No tweets. Mouffe, Bakhtin and Lévinas. We've been playing dialogue-theorist bingo and I won. We made up a card of possible suspects and I won! I never win anything! (Fig.11.8)

Marsha Bradfield: Well, I'm sorry our references have been so predictable. But if we could get back to Bakhtin, Lévinas, subjectivity and authorial ethics, please. I should say that the *Ethical Vectors for Dialogic Art* emerged from my discussion with the Wisemans regarding Bakhtin's and Lévinas's theories of intersubjectivity and their ethical theories of self-other relations,²¹ though the document does not explicitly acknowledge this.

Krista Wiseman: So, if you hadn't noticed, my mother favours Bakhtin's ethics and my father, Lévinas's.

David Rooksby: And Lévinas would be?

Krista Wiseman: Emmanuel Lévinas, Jewish French philosopher, spawn of Heidegger and Husserl, explored ethics—among other things.

Phil Hind: Your parents debate this recursively, do they?

Krista Wiseman: Regularly! It's our family equivalent to Abbot and Costello's 'Who's on first?' I've heard it so often that I know it like the back of my hand—or your *face*, Mother.

Tina Wiseman: Oh, darling, no wonder you never made it as a comedian.

David Rooksby: That was a joke?

Krista Wiseman: Well, if there was any doubt in anyone's mind of her interest in vectors and infecting someone with dis-ease—

Christian Wiseman: I should say that Krista's face comment relates to something that Bakhtin's and Levinas's thinking on intersubjectivity share. Both conceptualise self-other relations in terms of *face-to-face* encounter, with the self being produced through encountering the other and vice versa.²²


David Rooksy: Ding ding.

Tina Wiseman: For Bakhtin, this encounter turns on what he calls an 'excess of seeing'. I can't see my forehead or other parts of my own face, which is why I need you—
an other—to see them on my behalf.²³ You, in effect, complete me through bearing witness to my existence.

Christian Wiseman: In the case of Lévinas, it is the sight of another's face that implores me not to kill. In the other's face, I can recognise my own humanity.²⁴

Krista Wiseman: But wait, there's more.

Christian Wiseman: I don't think there's any question that Levinas's approach offers the most ethical basis for co-authorial practice, because it prioritises the *other* over the *self*. And this is the great corrective in the Western philosophical tradition, which has historically privileged the *self* over all *others*.²⁵ This is, of course, one of the ways that Descartes's Cartesian subject—*cognito ergo sum*, 'I think therefore I am'—has been interpreted. The self's subjectivity—the self's sense



Duchamp's Sister

@CassyAppadurai

The discussion is moving too fast for me to tweet. Let's just say that it's an ethical face off between Bakhtin(TW) and Levinas(CW)

#dicamp

Expand

10m



Duchamp's Sister

@CassyAppadurai

TW: What we need is dialogue based on sociological interaction as a basis for self-other relations. #diacamp

Expand

10m

of self—depends on the *self's* thinking. But there's no recognition of the self and the self's thinking being socially produced through their relations with other selves.

Tina Wiseman: Yes, of course the other takes *priority*. But this priority accrues by force of the other completing the self through their excess of seeing, which is a reciprocal act.²⁶ This empirical need for the other confirms our *interdependence*.

David Rooksby: Ding ding!

Maeve Cutty: What round is this, then, and who is winning? Is this still bingo or are we boxing, now?

Tina Wiseman: Granted, I am reliant on the other, but I am also *responsible* for my own self—owing to what Bakhtin terms my 'non-alibi of being'. This is the idea that no one else can occupy my unique place in the world and, consequent to this, no one else can be responsible for me, any more than I can be responsible for anyone else.²⁷

Christian Wiseman: Which is precisely what makes Bakhtin's approach *selfish* and *self-serving*.²⁸ According to Lévinas, I am infinitely responsible to and for the other—even my worst enemies. And bear in mind that his entire family perished in the Nazi concentration camps.²⁹ Yet Lévinas holds fast to is what he calls the 'relation without relation'. This is to say that I can never fully know an other because I can never assimilate the other's alterity into myself.³⁰ And yet I am still responsible to and for the other—even when I cannot fully grasp this responsibility. The asymmetry of this relation, my obligation to the other—

Tina Wiseman: 'Is the crucible of my existence.'

Krista Wiseman: And then she says—


Tina Wiseman: What is the point of grappling with something ethically when we cannot understand it? What is the basis for our decisions if they are beyond our grasp? It's tantamount to shirking our responsibility for our *singular* existence by saying that we're not responsible for our actions because they're subject to forces beyond our control! All this points to the significance of a responsive subject as foundational to ethical life, as a subject who is able to respond! There is no productive agency in Lévinasian ethics because I will always fail to meet the other's needs—necessarily—by force of never being able to assimilate their alterity—to never know them fully and hence fully know what they need from me.³¹

Krista Wiseman: And then he says—

Christian Wiseman: Levinas's ethics are based on something deeper than understanding—a precious affinity, a shared humanity.

Krista Wiseman: Which brings us to—

Tina Wiseman: Next you're going tell me that empathy is the core of ethical life, but I contest this—in the name of Bakhtin, I contest this—for the same reason that I contest 'The Golden Rule'³². How can I walk in someone else's shoes without leaving my own? I can no more know what they are thinking and feeling than I can escape my own thoughts and feelings.³³ Empathy is a *myth*; it's psychological projection masquerading as *care* for the other. What we need is



Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai

10m

SW: What's at stake in an interlocutor's skill as she fights and seduces=more important than her position (relativism) #dacamp

Expand

dialogue based on sociological interaction as a basis for self-other relations—as a basis for ethical life. And we need to understand this dialogue as *co-authored*. It is produced *between* us and in the process inscribes the terms of our intersubjective relation.³⁴ It defines us as *responsive* subjects because, as I’ve said, it draws out our agency to respond which results in our need to account for our lives and recognise ourselves as subjugated through our experience.

- John Johnson:

Seriously?!
- Krista Wiseman:

Seriously.
- [The timer rings.]
- Allison Jones:

Well, then, as the time is up, Krista, could you tell us how this routine ends?
- Krista Wiseman:

She fakes a seizure and he falls for it.
- Shadworth Dyson:

Ah, the seduction of the utterance.
- Marsha Bradfield:

Seduction?
- Shadworth Dyson:

It’s Paul de Man’s critique of Bakhtin’s scholarship on Dostoevsky as a polyphonic author.³⁵ But I sense this is beyond the scope of our discussion. We’ll leave it for another time.
- Krista Wiseman:

No please continue—anything to make them stop.
- Shadworth Dyson:

Yes, well, this is rather convoluted, albeit germane for our consideration of *Art Idol 2010*—and, in fact, dialogic art more generally, as it gets to utterance literacy as the very heart of this way of working. For Bakhtin, polyphony refers to the author’s relationship to the heroes in his text; polyphony, in Bakhtin’s thinking, describes, in particular, the way that Dostoevsky’s heroes take up markedly distinct points of view from their author. Dostoevsky’s great accomplishment, as far as Bakhtin is concerned, was to make their voices sound ‘alongside’³⁶ his own, without their becoming a ‘mouthpiece’³⁷ for his views.
- Marsha Bradfield:

I don’t follow. How does this relate to the seduction of the utterance and to ethics and subjectivity?
- Shadworth Dyson:

Yes, well, de Man notes the common sense that Dostoevsky’s heroes cannot achieve *literal* alterity because they are still the author’s heroes³⁸—will and willed remain dependent.

But, argues de Man, to focus on this, as Bakhtin tends to, is to miss the point of polyphony because the heroes achieve difference, not through being existentially independent from the author, but by assuming distinct positions in the author’s text.³⁹ De Man gives a wonderful example of this, which he deems more dialogic than Dostoevsky’s novels, and which is the post-face to Rousseau’s *New Héloïse*.

Now, this stages a dialogue between the reader and the writer of the text, with Rousseau authoring both positions, but what’s significant about this exchange is that it puts in play two simultaneous dialogues. There is a *hermeneutic* one, as reader and writer tussle over whether the content of the book is fact or fiction. The results are inconclusive; they cannot agree.⁴⁰ But more importantly for our purposes here there is the *second* dialogue, which



Fig. 11.9

is preoccupied with how the dialogue is *staged*. De Man writes something to the effect that what’s at stake is not whether or not the text is fact or fiction. What is instead at stake is the interlocutors’ skill—what I place under the banner of utterance literacy—as they fight and seduce each other in the throes of arguing their respective points of view.⁴¹ Crucially, this points to the text’s *poetics* instead of its hermeneutics—at least, in de Man’s reading and as the main source of meaning⁴²—and these poetics hinge on the interlocutors’ positionality and the way this finds expression, or *form*, in the text, through their exchange.

Marsha Bradfield: Well, in light of what you’ve said, Shadworth, would you like to weigh in on what this might mean in the case of my collating *Art Idol 2010* into a dialogic artwork?

Shadworth Dyson: Yes, well, I’m broadly in agreement with Maeve’s point about the author as scriptor as well as Brian’s regarding the importance of assuming an authorial position, my understanding being that this position is self-aware because, following Dostoevsky’s model, it has other aspirations than playing ‘Author-God’. Let me explain what I mean by this. I would suggest that, as the artist-author, you might imagine and enact the artist-contenders as what Bakhtin describes as ‘heroes’—characters—in your edit. In which case, your challenge would be to draw out the ways in which they fought and seduced each other over the course of their decision-making in *Art Idol 2010*. But what strikes me as central to this approach is *fiction*, by which I mean that, for your edit to be ethically viable, it must register as some kind of fiction.

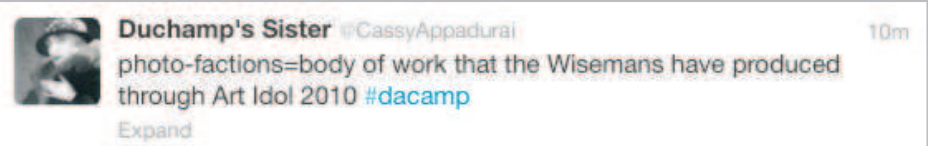
Marsha Bradfield: I think I understand what you mean by this but—

Shadworth Dyson: Yes, well, quite simply, and in light of what you’ve shared with us today, your position as an artist-researcher-scriptor-collator could involve fictionalising *Art Idol 2010* in a way that affords a degree of transparency about the edit being *yours*. It is fiction in the same way that all accounts are fictional because they are always partial and incomplete. This returns us to Tina’s point about being a responsive subject. As the editor, you have the ability to *respond* and I am suggesting that you make the *basis—the reasons*—for your response explicit in the edit, in some way. But this isn’t only *my* thinking. It’s right there in your working document, Marsha, in vector number six. The final sentence reads, ‘The practice of dialogic art seeks to innovate representational strategies for making [the author’s] response manifest in dialogic artworks.’ And how exactly you go about accomplishing this is something that I look forward to observing in your forthcoming installation.

Allison Jones: Marsha, it’s now 6:30. There’s still Phil’s contribution to go and the guideline session. We’re going to run out of time.

Marsha Bradfield: But we haven’t considered even half of the ethical vectors.

Tina Wiseman: Nor have we looked at the photo-based artworks that we produced through and in response to *Art Idol 2010*.



Marsha Bradfield: Yes, I’m sorry about that. Perhaps we could close with you and Christian offering a few words about this body of work? I should mention that it will feature in the installation, which I hope you’ll all come and experience.

Christian Wiseman: Right then, perhaps I’ll just show a detail quickly, as a kind of teaser for the exhibition? (Fig. 11.9) What you are looking at in the slide, and this relates directly to Shadworth’s comments about fiction, is what Tina and I have come to call *photo-factions*. ‘Faction’ refers to a combination of fact and fiction. The form is based on photo-romances, which are romantic stories that come together as a sequence of photographs in the style of a comic strip, like the kind published in magazines.⁴² The photo-romance is a genre that has been used by other cultural producers to explore collaboration.

The London-based Carrotworkers, for example, use them as a collective tool for identifying and coming to terms with the narrative moments in which our romantic and utopian desires coalesce.⁴³ In *our* adaptation of *their* adaptation of this genre, we used stills from the footage of *Art Idol 2010*, which feature in Marsha’s edits, and we animated them with a combination of speech and thought bubbles. (Fig. 11.9) The speech bubbles contain factual utterances—citations—from the footage, while the thought bubbles are fictional speculations about what the artist-contenders may have been thinking at that moment in the event.

Marsha Bradfield: And it’s the photo-factions’ speculative approach that intrigues me. It’s as though they’re enacting something *like* intersubjectivity, like they’re representing what’s involved in *trying* to understand the world from the perspectives of other subjects without ever *actually* having access to what goes on in their minds.

Tina Wiseman: But the fact that the utterances are speculative—that we *don’t* actually have access to what’s going on in the heads of others—underscores that this very impossibility is, well, a fiction.

KK Lin: I’m not always certain myself what I think about something.

Marsha Bradfield: I can identify with that! And yet we manage to communicate with each other. I’m intrigued by the photo-factions in their attempt to dramatise this process as subjects move between thought and action. I’m interested in how they use the combination of vocal and sub-vocal utterances as what Clark would surely call a ‘dialogic tactic’, if he were still here, with this interplay being an ongoing process of call and response. I don’t, however, think they’re about solving a problem—about overcoming our inability to access the interior world of others and assimilate their alterity. It occurs to me this isn’t so much a limitation as it is *constitutive of our human condition*. In my view, the photo-factions are instead about gaining *insight* into how we manage to interact despite this—how we manage to get along with understandings that are always partial and biased and how this limited understanding is also a form of subjugation, when it shapes us as subjects. Or at least these are some of the things the photo-factions explore, in my view.

Allison Jones: Marsha, the *time*.



John Johnson: Okay, I understand we’re out of time, Allison. But, look, before we move on, I’m sure everyone else is as curious as I am about whose ethics of intersubjectivity Marsha has settled on or is leaning towards? Bakhtin’s or Lévinas’s?

Marsha Bradfield: Well, I’ve been thinking about the possibility of following Lévinas’s *philosophical* example—his approach to prioritising the other—but taking *this* approach with the knowledge that it will fail, because, as Tina noted, we will fail, owing to our self-centredness. And when we do, we should turn to Bakhtin’s more *ethico-sociological* understanding to grapple with *how* and *why* we failed—how this failure occurred by accounting for our *irresponsibility*—by which I mean our failure or inability to respond effectively in light of circumstances, both within and beyond our control. So it’s about moving between Bakhtin’s and Lévinas’s respective positions and using them to supplement each other, as neither is sufficient on its own.

David Rooksby: Ding ding.

Marsha Bradfield: Thank you, Tina, Christian and Maeve. I know we haven’t lingered long at the intersection of ethics, authorship and subjectivity, but we’ve at least indicated some of what’s at stake in taking up the challenge of locating artistic practice in the nexus of their respective concerns.

[Barcamp claps.]

¹*Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. ‘vector’.

²*Ibid.*, s.v. ‘vector’.

³David Perlman, ‘Ethics in Clinical Research: A History of Human Subject Protections and Practical Implementation of Ethical Standards’, *SoCRA Source* (May 2004): 37. In contrast to ‘morality’, Perlman defines ‘ethics’ as ‘the systematic study of values by which a determination of what the right and wrong thing to do is made . . . The challenge, especially in a practical environment such as clinical research, is to translate the theoretical concepts from ethics into action. The regulations help us accomplish this task’.

⁴*Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. ‘moral’.

⁵*Ibid.*

⁶Perlman, ‘Ethics in Clinical Research’, 37–41.

⁷For example, Sharon Bennett, one of the contenders in *Art Idol 2010*, has subsequently joined Critical Practice, through which we have worked together on numerous projects, including *ValueCamp* (documented at Neil Cummings <http://www.neilcummings.com/content/valuecamp> [accessed May 20, 2012]).

⁸This suggestion was made by my supervisor Mary Anne Francis. However, I did not follow it for reasons elaborated in this barcamp contribution.

⁹Christina Allen, ‘What’s Wrong with the “Golden Rule”? Conundrums of Conducting Ethical Research in Cyberspace’, *The Information Society: An International Journal* 12 vol. 2 (1996): 177.

¹⁰Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990), 72.

¹¹Sevda Çalışkan, ‘Ethical Aesthetics/Aesthetic Ethics: The Case of Bakhtin,’ *Journal of Arts and Sciences*, Çankaya Üniversitesi Fen–edebiyat Fakültesi, 5 (May 2006): 3. As Çalışkan notes, two central organising principles in Bakhtin’s philosophical thinking include the primacy of the particular over the general, and an emphasis on plurality in contrast unity. When it comes to Bakhtin’s ethical approach, this tends to translate into an emphasis on the individual taking responsibility for their own course of action by answering with their own life. See, for instance, his earlier essay, ‘Art and Answerability,’ in *Art and Answerability: Early Philosophical Essays*, ed. Michael Holquist and Vadim Liapunov [Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990], 1–3.)

¹²Flint Schier, ‘Painting after Art?: Comments on Wollheim’, in *Art in Theory 1990–1990: An Anthology of Changing Ideas*, ed. C. Harrison and P. Wood (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), 1113. Although not directly cited in this thesis, much of my thinking around ‘second–order interlocutors’ or ‘second–order authors’ has been informed by Schier’s discussion of the ‘reciprocal bond of intimacy’, with the artist assuming the author position of ‘artist–as–spectator’. This is to say that they try to engage with their practice from the perspective

of someone other than themselves encountering it, in an attempt to anticipate the ways in which it might be meaningful for those not directly involved in its production.

¹³E. H. Basset and Kathleen O’Riordan, ‘Ethics of Internet Research: Contesting the Human Subjects Model’, *Internet Research Ethics*, http://www.nyu.edu/projects/nissenbaum/ethics_bas_full.html (accessed April 10, 2009).

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Roland Barthes, ‘The Death of the Author’, in *Theories of Authorship*, ed. John Caughie (London, Boston and Henley: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981), 211.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Basset and O’Riordan, ‘Ethics of Internet Research: Contesting the Human Subjects Model’.

¹⁹Christina Allen, ‘What’s Wrong with the “Golden Rule”?’: 175–188.

²⁰John Stewart and Milt Thomas, ‘Dialogic Listening: Sculpting Mutual Meanings’, in *Bridges Not Walls: A Book about Interpersonal Communication*, ed. John Stewart (New York: McGraw–Hill, Inc.), 187.

²¹This discussion of Mikhail Bakhtin’s ethics versus those of Emmanuel Lévinas is informed by two important discussions on this relation: Jeffery T. Nealon, ‘The Ethics of Dialogue: Bakhtin’s Answerability and Levinas’s Responsibility’ in *Alterity Politics: Ethics and Performative Subjectivity* (Durham and London, 1998), 18-31 and Daphna Erdinast–Vulcan, ‘Between the Face and the Voice: Bakhtin meets Levinas’, *Continental Philosophy Review* 41, no.1 (2008): 43–58.

²²M. M. Bakhtin, *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*, ed. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990), 7; and Emmanuel Levinas, ‘Philosophy and the Idea of Infinity,’ in *Collected Philosophical Papers*, ed. Alphonso Lingis (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1987), 59.

²³M. M. Bakthin, *Art and Answerability*, 22–23.

²⁴Emmanuel Lévinas, *Ethics and Infinity: Conversations with Philippe Nemo* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1985), 87.

²⁵Emmanuel Lévinas, *Otherwise than Being: or Beyond Essence* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1998), 96.

²⁶Nealon, ‘The Ethics of Dialogue’, 46.

²⁷M. M. Bakhtin, *Toward a Philosophy of the Act*, ed. Michael Hoquist and Vadim Liapunov (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990), 40.

²⁸Nealon, *Alterity Politics*, 46.

²⁹Simon Critchley, ‘The Split Subject: On Lévinas’ Templeton Lecture Series, podcast (released December 4, 2007) <http://itunes.apple.com/gb/podcast/templeton-research-lectures/id205743414> (accessed May 10, 2011).

³⁰As quoted in Simon Critchley, *Infinitely Demanding: Ethics of Commitment, Politics of Resistance* (London: Verso, 2007), 57. Critchley notes that ‘the relation without relation’ is a central concept in Lévinas’s, *Totality and Infinity*. Here, the philosopher aims to elaborate ‘the relation without relation’ as both ethical and paradoxical.

³¹Ibid., 61. Critchley writes, ‘In short, the Lévinasian ethical subject is a traumatic neurotic . . . The point here is that, for Lévinas, the ethical demand is a traumatic demand, it is something that comes from outside the subject, from a heteronomous source, but which leaves its imprint on the subject.’

³²Stewart and Thomas, ‘Dialogic Listening: Sculpting Mutual Meanings’, 187.

³³Ibid.

³⁴Paul de Man, ‘Dialogue and Dialogism’, *Poetics Today* 4, no. 1 (1983), 103.

³⁵M. M. Bakhtin, *The Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics*, ed. and trans. Caryl Emerson (London: University of Minnesota Press, 1984): 6.

³⁶Bakhtin, *The Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics*, 6.

³⁷de Man, ‘Dialogue and Dialogism,’ 103. De Man writes, ‘Novelists like Dostoevsky or, one might surmise, Balzac, reveal their exotopy when they simply ignore strongly suggestive oppositions as those between author and character: Dostoevsky’s or Balzac’s characters are not voices of authorial identity or identification (not: *Madame Bovary, c’est moi*) but voices of radical alterity, not because they are fictions and the author isn’t, but because their otherness is their reality. The reality principle coincides with the principle of otherness’.

³⁸de Man, ‘Dialogue and Dialogism’, 103.

³⁹Ibid., 105.

⁴⁰Ibid., 106.

⁴¹Ibid., 106

⁴²‘Photo–romances,’ Carrot Workers’ Collective <http://carrotworkers.wordpress.com/?s=photo-romances+&submit=Search> (accessed July 10, 2011).

⁴³Ibid.



Fig. 12.0



Fig. 12.1

- Marsha Bradfield:** Phil, you’re last but certainly not least before we go into John’s roundup. Here is the remote.
- Phil Hind:** Thank you. An upshot of having this final slot is that it offers a good vantage point for surveying what has been said.
- Cassy Appadurai:** So tell us, Phil: ‘What is dialogic art?’
- Phil Hind:** Well, intersubjective exchange has, of course, been a common denominator in most of the responses offered today, and we’ve placed primacy on *human* authors.
- David Rooksby:** You’ve got a different idea.
- Phil Hind:** Yes, well. That being *what* as opposed to *whom*—*what* authors dialogic art in addition to the people involved, the sentient interlocutors? We have made moves today towards a more heterogeneous sense of authorship. But the truth is, we’ve only just *begun* the task of ordering and orientating this in dialogic art.
- John Johnson:** Okay—before you go on, remind me in what ways a more heterogeneous sense of authorship has *begun* to coalesce? I mean, *I* know, but for the benefit of the *others*. I’m sure *they’re* all tired.
- Phil Hind:** Yes, yes, of course, very amusing, John. It starts with awareness. You’ll remember that, in their discussion, Maeve and Marsha touched on textuality with reference to the author’s demise. So textuality as an uthor of the text. And—forgive me for mentioning this, Ella—but Ella and Brian’s crashed hard drive was an instance of the mediating effects of technology. The result, on your account, Ella, was that your contribution was less cohesive than you

HETEROGENEOUS MATERIALS

Fig. 12.2



- 1. ACTOR NETWORK THEORY – A USEFUL WAY OF TACKLING DIALOGIC ART?
- 2. DIALOGIC ART – AND EMPIRICAL EXAMPLE *PARADE*
- 3. SPATIALITY AND ITERATION
- 4. ?

Fig. 12.3

John Johnson:

Phil Hind:

would have liked. But the truth is, it actually opened up space for discussion that may not have otherwise occurred. In effect, this failure was generative-- Okay, you're not only saying that things like textuality and technology are *authors*. You're also saying that, for instance, this technological failure resulted in a *dialogue*?

I am indeed. It was tantamount to a kind of utterance, wasn't it? It demanded a response, didn't it? And can't we think about our relation to technology in this broader way? Take the Twitter live-feed—in fact, take it away! Apologies to Cassy and Anne, but it's distracting—non-stop call and response, call and response, *call* and *response*. But we used it as a channel for meta-dialogue to supplement our discussion—to go above and beyond what it was possible for us to voice. It makes good sense to me, then, that we should nominate this feed as one of the barcamp's *interlocutors*. And the truth is, we could do the same for the slides, the barcamp packs, the chairs, the projector and probably more, if we put our heads together. (Fig. 12.0)

Bourdieu would call the barcamp format a *structuring structure*¹—an objective structure that both *structures* and *is structured by* our subjective dispositions, which in turn inform our intersubjective relations.

David Rooksby:

Phil Hind:

Ding ding. More reciprocity. Objective structures have recognisable patterns and principles—terms of engagement—that structure our subjective and intersubjective interactions. The barcamp format mediates our discussion of dialogic art by *structuring* our understandings in common. It also structures our expectations and assumptions about how this discursive format will unfold—as well as our exchange within it.² Put another way, the barcamp's heterogeneous bits and pieces have *performative effect*. Our discursive exchange has drifted from topic to topic; as a result, today's engagement with dialogic art has been broader than it has been deep. If the Twitter feed exemplifies the kind of technology organising our intersubjective exchange, then the performativity of this organisation has also *prevented* other things from happening—including the rigorous and reflexive examination of what comes together as this thing called a 'barcamp'. One of the stated rationales for today's event was to shed light on the occurrence of intersubjective dialogue in dialogic art through objects, materials and other forms of one kind or another. *This* is the heterogeneity I want to engage. (Fig 12.2)

My question is more than, 'What is dialogic art?'—more like, 'What is dialogic art *if we think about all the heterogeneous bits and pieces that both enable and mediate the intersubjective exchange at stake in this practice of cultural production?*' We could explore this in numerous ways, but I'm going to tackle it sociologically, through Actor Network Theory, also known as ANT.³

First off, a little signposting. So my contribution will move through four parts. (Fig. 12.3) First, to lay the groundwork, I hope simply to persuade you that this is a useful way to tackle dialogic art.



Fig. 12.4

Marsha Bradfield

@marshabradfield

GP re 'But how?' – otherwise = 'rote ontology' – beginning of knowledge passing for end. #diacamp

Expand Reply Delete Favorite

20s

Maeve Cutty

@MaeveCutty

So back to 'how' in contrast to what. #diacamp

Expand Reply Delete Favorite

6s

Assume the Position

@EllaandBrian

Much much discussion re performativity in BC - See J McKenzie's 'Perform or Else' for good source.

Expand Reply Delete Favorite

now

Assume the Position

@EllaandBrian

Future research in DA might consider 'emergence theory' – re: the whole being greater than the sum of its parts. #diacamp

Expand Reply Delete Favorite

now

Second, I'll apply ANT to an empirical example, (Fig. 12.4) a dialogic art project composed of distinct spatiotemporal events. This is *PARADE*, a project that Marsha worked on and I'll say more about this soon enough. I'll talk about *PARADE* to demonstrate both the *relevance* of ANT as a tool for reflexively conceptualising and creating dialogic art, and its *importance* to understanding what dialogic art is and what function it might serve in the field of contemporary art and, potentially, beyond it. I hope to show how ANT, in particular, might dispel our *anthropocentric* bias about dialogue—how it might point out the ways in which there are *always* more than people involved—because I see this bias as an obstacle to a common-sense understanding of dialogic art.

Third, I'll discuss *spatiality*. I'll suggest how dialogic artworks move through different kinds of space as we iteratively reassemble them, and then I'll talk about the ways these iterations inform each other. The truth is, there are various possibilities, but they relate in part to the 'dialogic bonus' generated through the ongoing production of the artwork. And you will recall that according to Clark, this is an excess that accretes when dialogue is in in dialogue with itself. This is key if we are to understand the heterogeneity of dialogic art as an expression of its dialogic significance—a heterogeneity that resides not only *in* each dialogic work of art, but also *through* and *across* its iterations. Questions?

David Rooksby:

What's the fourth part?

Phil Hind:

Yes, yes, of course. The fourth part will be our discussion, where I'll try and clarify my thinking.

Brian Updike:

Brilliant. That being the case and to play devil's advocate, I've already got some reservations regarding what you're saying about 'iteration'. What about the relation between, for instance, a performance and its documentation? Would 'iteration' result in conflating these things, or making them more distinct? These questions carry sizeable baggage in discussions of the *non-availability* of relational art, and other types of art. In other words, where does the *art* reside? In the performance? In its documentation? In both? Do you follow?

Phil Hind:

Yes, quite. I think dialogic art knows all too well that artworks don't exist without *recursive* re-presentation and *discursive* production. It also knows that artworks change in the course of this re-presentation and production process, as they move through time and space. Using ANT methods to track this change could advance dialogic art in its quest to understand the application of a simple truism that's come up several times today—*how an artwork's whole is greater than the sum of its parts*. From an ANT perspective, this would include accounting for the ways in which an artwork's iterations—as parts of its whole—inform each other. I'll argue that reassembly, in the case of your example, Brian, would resist collapsing the performance and its documentation by conceptualising these iterations as distinct but contingent *events*.

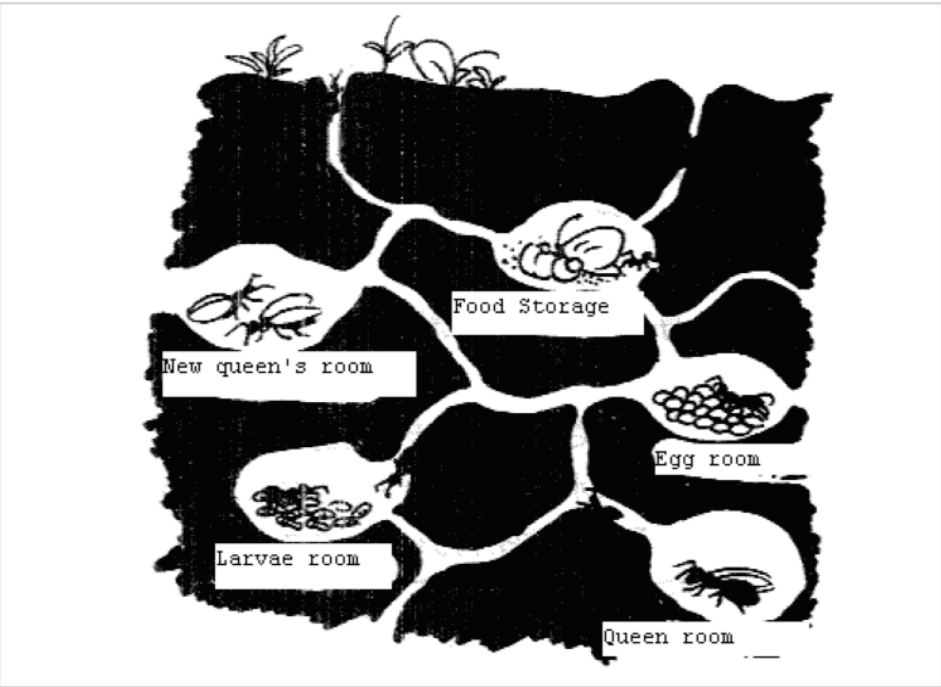


Fig. 12.5



Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai 8s
BU: ANT looks at the world as networks inside networks that overlap with other networks... #diacamp
Expand Reply Delete Favorite



What is dialogic art @DialogicArt now
We've come full circle – from Clark's BCC on labour to Phil's #diacamp
Expand Reply Delete Favorite



Fig. 12.6

Shadworth Dyson: Or utterances!

John Johnson: Okay, so what you're saying, Phil, is that iterations are the parts of a dialogic artwork's whole?

Phil Hind: They are *one* kind of part. This morning, Brian spoke about the discursive production of relational art, through its commentary. But agonism in this production—agonism as an expression of intersubjectivity, as a name for a specific 'variety of relations between perspectives'⁴—is only one way of reassembling a dialogic artwork. ANT offers another, which I'll describe in good time. But first, a few more words of introduction to ANT.

'Actor Network Theory' is a branch of sociology that also goes by a host of other names, including 'sociology of translation', 'actant-rhizomme ontology' and 'sociology of associations'. Regardless of which name you use, it turns on the topology of networks. ANT looks at the world as networks inside networks that overlap with other networks.⁵ But, beyond just being another instance of nesting, what does this mean? (Fig 12.5)

Well, it means three things. First, networks mean *work*.⁶ Think of an artwork as a network. It takes all kinds of labour to organise the actors and objects involved—first- and second-order authors, planning, funding, galleries, protocols, paperwork, paint and plaster, nails and walls, and plinths and all the rest. The aim is to create a network that is durable enough to have a sustained presence—an expression that can move through time and space. *No* durable expression, *no* artwork.

Brian Updike: Absolutely. This is where documentation comes in.

Phil Hind: Correct and I'll say more about this soon enough.

Second, there is the *material* matter of composing a network, but there is also the matter of *ordering* all these materials. So networking, then, is a particular kind of organisational practice—a practice of *fitting* pieces together.⁷ (Fig. 12.7) So, here is an ANT understanding of an artwork: it is a process of artistic ordering in which aspects of the social, material, technical, conceptual and textual are all *converted*—or '*translated*', as ANT theorists like to say—into cultural artifacts.⁸

My third point is two-fold. The claim that ANT makes—that is, that the world is composed of networks—is radical for two reasons. On the one hand, it denaturalises the cohesion of cultural artifacts by insisting on them as *effects of relations* that extend well beyond the artifact itself. Therefore, if there is no contemporary context—no art history or tradition, for instance—there is no art. But the idea of the world-as-networks is also radical because it says that networks are composed not only of *materials* but also *people*. ANT theorists often battle to overcome the fallacy that the social is primarily human. The ANT argument is that society would not exist in the absence of food, shelter and other forms of material organisation.⁹ In art, however, the inverse view seems to prevail. Maeve argued that artworks as artifacts exist in the world independently of their authors. What takes priority is an artwork's materiality, whether it's textuality or otherwise.



KK Lin @KKLin1

DA cumulative through iterations—iterative process?

Expand

5s



KK Lin @KKLin1

Can we think accumulation through distribution—contingent, dispersed + accumulation. #diacamp

Expand Reply Delete Favorite

10s



TheJargonBuster @TheJargonBuste1

ANT = post-structuralist semiotics - instance of relational materiality. #diacamp

4s



Duchamp's Sister @CassyAppadurai

ANT controversial because doesn't discriminate between people and materials in networks. #diacamp

Expand Reply Delete Favorite

now

Maeve Cutty:

Given all this, how can we account for the anthropocentric bias in the dialogues of dialogic art? It doesn't seem very art-like to me.

Yes, luv, quite right, but who says that people aren't integral to art? Not Barthes. He called for the *romantic author's* death and proposed plural author-positions in his wake—more a distribution of authorship across author as scriptor and reader as author,¹⁰ if you will. You were of course right to say that textuality also plays an authorial role, but there are *always* people involved. Obviously.

Allison Jones:

You might also be interested, Phil, in Marcel Duchamp's sense that artworks are activated through their *encounter*. This is theoretically orthodox in the discourse of art. As Duchamp puts it, the artist or artists are not the only ones performing the creative act. The 'spectator' also brings the artwork into contact with the world through their interpretation. Now there was something else I wanted to say but it's slipped my mind. Oh yes, Duchamp is also attentive to the accidents in an artwork's production and deems they have authorial purchase by rendering them *other to* the artist's intentions.¹¹ However, these effects are only deemed accidental by force of their marking a *difference* between the artist's intentions and the artwork's actual manifestation. So, to echo Maeve, there are *always* people involved, even when we acknowledge that authorship can also involve non-human effects.

Phil Hind:

What you're saying, Allison, if I may put it another way, is that, when contemporary art practice is informed by these authorial theories, it shares with ANT the non-reductionist view. Not only do cultural artifacts and their authors resist being teased apart but also, and importantly, neither drives the other.¹²

Allison Jones:

I wouldn't go that far. There simply is *no* art without authors.

Phil Hind:

Yes, yes, of course. But by the same token, neither are there authors *without artworks* in the case of art. In practice, though, it's never a case of 'either/or'. And what's more interesting is *how* authorship can be 'and/also'—or to put it another way, *how* human and non-human authors co-author works of art. The truth is, tackling dialogic artworks as *networks* could help us identify and distinguish the authors and authorial forces in dialogic art—one from the other, but also *contingent* on one another. In a word, *networked*.

ANT stems from a post-structuralist sense of semiotics that can be defined as an instance of *relational materiality*. This means that entities generate significance in *relation* to each other; nothing has reality outside of some enactment of relations—the network—that organises it into existence.¹³ This is as true for language as it is for dialogic art.

David Rooksby:

Finally, something that's not rocket science. But tell me again—what makes ANT so useful to dialogic art, in particular?

Phil Hind:

Well, David, if we can agree that *networking* is another name for *dialoguing* in dialogic art, then ANT not only gives us methodological tools to identify

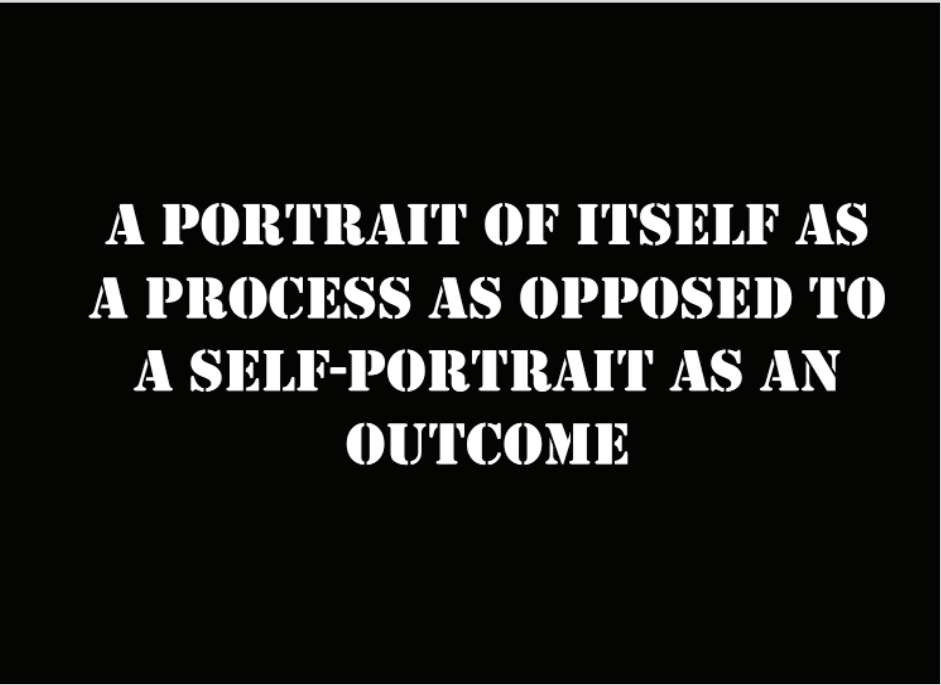


Fig. 12.7

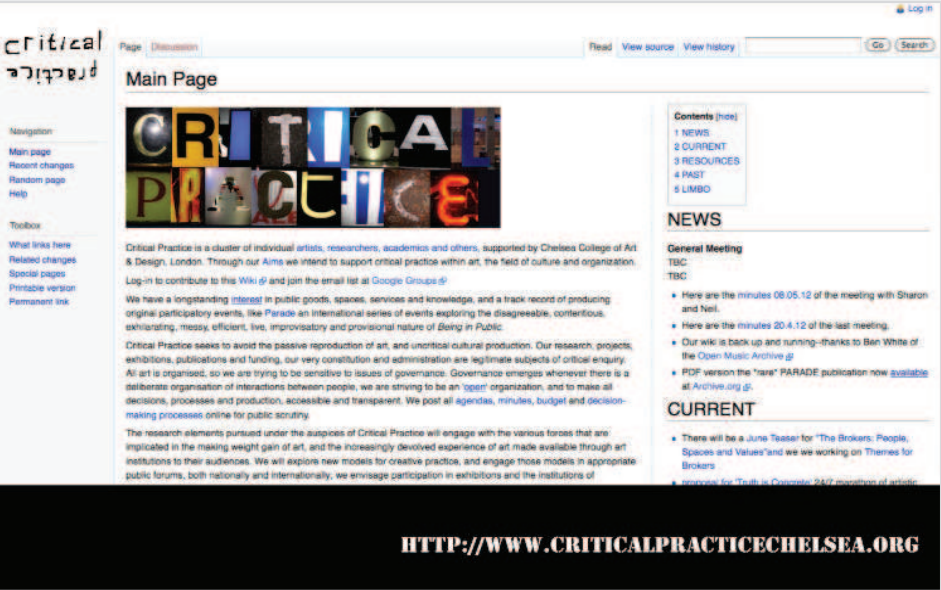


Fig. 12.8

the range of author-interlocutors and utterances that compose this art and practice, but also to see them as constitutive. ANT would say that, without dialogues-as-networks, there simply is no dialogic art.

Allison Jones: If I follow your logic, Phil, dialoguing is analogous to networking and dialogues to networks. Would this then make the *utterances* in dialogues akin to the *nodes* in networks?

Phil Hind: Yes, but there is something else. We need to think about all these relations against the backdrop of what sociologist John Law has called ‘endless network ramification’,¹⁴ and the truth is that we don’t, in practice, cope well with it. We may acknowledge the artwork as network-contingent in *theory* but, in *practice*, we often apprehend it as something discrete, set apart from its surroundings instead of being part and parcel of them.

KK Lin: I, um, remember seeing some photographs by Wolfgang Tillmans in the Guggenheim years ago. They were suspended from dog clips. The plaster was chipped where the nails had been hammered into the wall and hadn’t been repaired. I don’t remember the photographs well, but I remember the *chipped* plaster. It made quite an impression on me, I think because it broke up any sense of the artwork’s coherence.

Phil Hind: Good example, KK. ANT would call this break ‘depunctualisation’.¹⁵ In my understanding, dialogic art thrives on *depunctualising itself*. It does this by drawing attention to the range of actors, objects and other heterogeneous materials in dialogue that compose each artwork as a network. Think about the examples of dialogic art we’ve considered today: there was the image that documented the building process in *Chantier Barbès-Rochecouart*; the before-and-after photographs in *The Philosophy of Science and Mutation*; the 108 responses in *Take Care of Yourself*; and the chain of questions and answers in *Interview*. All of these artistic methods evidence depunctualisation by enacting an array of durable relations that hold all the materials together as works of art.

The truth—or my sense of it, anyway—is that dialogic art can be stated very simply. Dialogues and networks are both ways of describing heterogeneous materials in *affective relation*. And given the preoccupation with intersubjective exchange in dialogic art, any dialogic artwork informed by ANT’s network sensibility would *show* us how these heterogeneous materials mediate intersubjective exchange. Dialogic artworks would then *help* us to appreciate the non-trivial consequences of their materials—their *performative effects*—on the intersubjective exchange they enable and the artistic significance to which they give rise.

KK Lin: Um, can we go back to reflexivity? I think what you’re saying is that dialogic artworks *show us* themselves *showing us* themselves.¹⁶ Is that what you mean?

Phil Hind: Yes, quite. But how? Dialogic art and ANT are both intrigued by intersubjective exchange as a *social* phenomenon. ANT has good methods for grasping the social as something *enacted*, as opposed to *given*. So what



Fig. 12.9

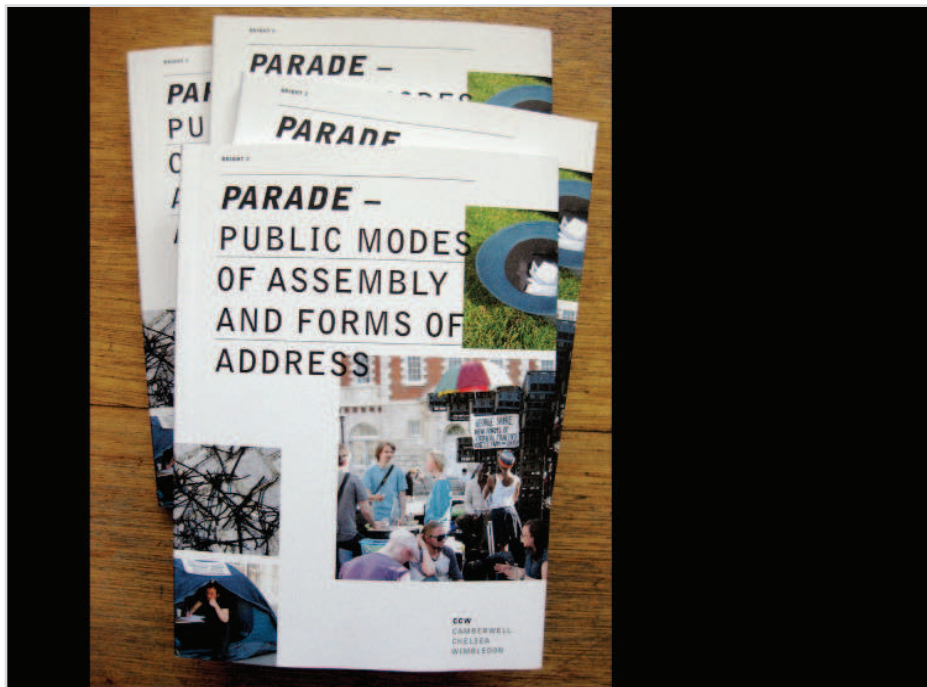


Fig. 12.11

I’m suggesting is that dialogic art should use these methods to explore and describe the *local composition* of each artwork—its process of patterning, ordering, organisation, intervention, juxtaposition, reciprocity and so on. I think ANT could enable dialogic artists to produce effects that they would not otherwise be able to realise. I can’t attest to anything above and beyond that; I can’t even say how this would qualify as *art*. But I can say that I envision each artwork as a kind of *portrait of itself as a process* as opposed to a *self-portrait as an outcome*. (Fig.12.7)

Ella Stone:

Oui, mais, is this not the same idea of the socially produced character of the art being made explicit *in* the form of the artwork?

Phil Hind:

Yes, yes, there are similarities, but I want to approach this from a different angle than you took in your discussion of *Take Care of Yourself*.

Picture it: you have a photo portrait taken at a studio as a souvenir for your degree award. Good clothes, hair, makeup, posture. Nice to look at, but what does it tell us about *you*? This genre of portraiture is selective in a *particular* way—it makes you look like a recent graduate. An ANT approach would consider, among other things, why *those* clothes, *that* hair, *that* makeup, *that* lighting, *that* posture, *that* photo format. It would likely come together in a series of portraits that represent *the process of this portraiture* as a network—a precarious operation, and one that could have been ordered differently.

John Johnson:

Okay, so that’s sociology. But, look, what about *art*?

Phil Hind:

Well, consider *PARADE* This dialogic artwork was organised by members of Critical Practice Research Cluster, including Marsha. Critical Practice is a group of artists, designers, researchers and others tethered to Chelsea College of Art and Design. (Fig. 12.8) According to the cluster’s wiki,

Critical Practice seeks to avoid the passive reproduction of art, and uncritical cultural production. Our research, projects, exhibitions, publications and funding, our very constitution and administration are legitimate subjects of critical enquiry. All art is organised, so we are trying to be sensitive to issues of governance. Governance emerges whenever there is a deliberate organisation of interactions between people; we are striving to be an ‘open’ organisation, and to make all decisions, processes and production, accessible and transparent.¹⁷

An important iteration of *PARADE* took place on the Rootstein Hopkins Parade Ground at Chelsea College in May of 2010. This was a weekend-long event that explored the social practice of being ‘in public’ as the culmination of two years of research carried out across the UK, Poland and online on the Critical Practice wiki. The program unfolded in the form of a large structure assembled in public from some 4,320 black plastic milk crates, which were held together with approximately 30,000 cable ties. (Fig. 12.9) From an ANT perspective, these ties were tools for ‘translation’.

Brian Updike:

And ‘translation’? That was something you referenced earlier in connection with boundary objects, correct?



Fig. 12.11



Fig. 12.12

Phil Hind: Yes, yes, of course. To refresh your memory, ‘translation’ refers to the enrolment of actors and objects into the network that holds them together.¹⁸ The ties held the crates together, which in turn held the event together. No ties, no architecture—no event like the one that occurred.

Earlier today, Marsha made metaphorical reference to the cable ties as a way of cinching together the utterances composing dialogic works of art. This was in response to Clark’s ambition that dialogic art might come together as *something other* than a project or an artwork. By now it should be obvious that, from an ANT perspective, this ‘something other’ is a *network*.

Cassy Appadurai: I’m sure it’s just because I’m getting tired; it’s been a long day. But I’m not getting the gist of how a parade can be a network—and if I can’t get the gist of it, I can’t capture it in tweets!

Phi Hind: Well *PARADE* wasn’t really a parade. Perhaps it would help for me to talk about *PARADE*’s approach to enacting *a portrait of itself as a process*, with reference to some of ANT’s methodological tools, which included reassemblage and framing, as well as accounts that were durable as opposed to exhaustive. My contribution will conclude with a few thoughts on spatiality in *PARADE*.

Reassembly proved a crucial tool in *PARADE*, for the simple reason that it was a large-scale and highly distributed project composed of wide-ranging relations across time and space. These relations were so numerous and diverse that they could not be juxtaposed in a single expression, such as a flow chart or an image, and certainly not an overarching account. So the challenge in the case of ANT-like self-portraiture in *PARADE* was to find a way of alluding to this array of relations. This required an account that was more indicative than conclusive. In fact, it was in this publication that I encountered *PARADE*. (Fig. 12.11)

Anne Lang: May I see please?

Phil Hind: Now, the event is over. I’m sorry I missed it. But the publication uses ANT-like strategies to reassemble the spatiotemporally diffuse project into a more durable form.

Marsha Bradfield: An aside, Phil. I think it’s important to mention the publication’s content was produced by Critical Practice and other contributors to *PARADE*, and edited by Neil Cummings.¹⁹

Phil Hind: Yes, of course. But let me offer a few general points before we get into specifics. To begin with, there’s framing—*sociological* framing. Does one zoom out and consider the macro—the social trends, norms, beliefs and so on? Or does one zoom in and focus on the minutiae, such as affect—for example, relations between bodies that we feel very strongly, but that we resist naming outright? ANT’s approach is to alternate between these frames and other ones. The resulting range of perspectives gives distinct but often overlapping insights into the relations between the heterogeneous materials that are linked together by the network.²⁰



Fig. 12.13

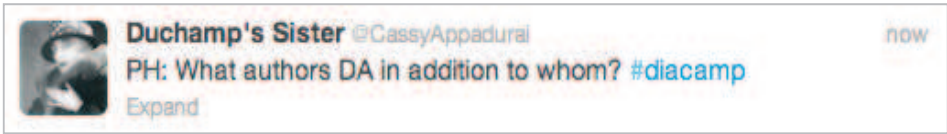


Fig. 12.14

Anne Lang: You know, it’s really nice the way the *PARADE* publication includes documentary images from different points of view. (Fig. 12.11) There are close-ups—I mean, details—as well as views shot from above.

Phil Hind: Apparently, they were taken from a balcony that overhangs the Rootstein Hopkins Parade Ground, where the event took place. (Fig. 12.12)

Marsha Bradfield: Yes, that’s right.

Phil Hind: You’ll note the photographs don’t show a fully assembled architectural structure ready and waiting to be occupied. These images are not the kinds of pristine ones that feature, for example, in architectural magazines. Rather, almost all of these images depict people interacting with the structure, and many of them show it under construction. What we see, in other words, is *how* it was inhabited—how, for instance, the structure played host to the day of barcamps on the Saturday, which explored being ‘in public’ in the past, present and future. (Fig 12.15)

Some of the photographs are taken from a bird’s eye view, but none of them is a god’s eye view. The truth is, there isn’t a cohesive portrait of *PARADE*. And, from an ANT perspective, there couldn’t be—at least not with any fidelity to the complexity of this project. Instead, there are *portraits* that show the slow process of tracking relations among actors, objects and networks to build up a picture of the situation being explored.²¹ This is what distinguishes an ANT approach.

John Johnson: Okay, but look—what if I came back with the observation that artists do this all the time? They make different kinds of documentation of their work, their practice. A few images of the process, an installation view, a detail, etcetera. The point is, how is *PARADE* represented *differently*? How is this account *distinct* from a run-of-the-mill artist book that documents a project in process?

Phil Hind: What if I put it another way and asked, ‘What does this run-of-the-mill artist book show, and why?’ Most representations of messy processes paint a very rosy picture—like the studio portrait I mentioned earlier—with all the disconcerting and ambiguous mess purged out of it.²² Perhaps if I offer another aspect of the publication, it will make better sense.

The publication includes Critical Practice’s meeting minutes. Like the photographs, they offer a schematic narrative of *PARADE*, but with the emphasis placed on *planning* and *development*. Many of the minutes read like transcripts, as they acknowledge the contributions of individual interlocutors over the course of a project’s development. The minutes embody intersubjective dialogue as a decision-making process—the ongoing dialogue that produced *PARADE*. As content in the *PARADE* publication, they account for the project’s becoming; and as a dialogic artwork composed of its authors’ utterances, the publication is an exemplar. The complexity here exceeds all the artworks we’ve considered so far. While Calle’s *Take Care of Yourself* may include a range of responses, the *PARADE* publication makes explicit the project’s planning, development *and* realisation.



Fig. 12.15

But the truth is that transcribing this process would not have been as simple as it may have seemed. Think again about the convocation portrait—about what it *doesn't* depict. We're all familiar with project reports that are broadly affirmative in their uncritical description, and it's apparent on reading them that they're too good to be true. Think of this as opposed to the minutes, which disclose not only what happened, but also what *didn't*—and, just as importantly, *why*.

Here's a case in point—the minutes of February 22, 2010. (Fig. 12.15) The architects have proposed a structure in the shape of a black cloud. The minutes note there must be a breakdown in communication. The black cloud has problematic associations—ash, terrorism, death. So the proposal doesn't support *PARADE's* modes of assembly in the ways Critical Practice envision. This isn't just a glitch in the process. The cluster is concerned enough about the architects' failure to meet their needs that it identifies a 'plan B'—if the existing architects can't deliver, they will ask another architectural firm to pick up the slack. In the end, the original architects come through. But the minutes capture this on the move, not after it's a done deal.

Now, earlier, Tina referenced the 'responsive subject' as one *who is able to respond*. The *PARADE* publication posits an 'accountable subject' as a complement or extension of this subjectivity. This subject is made literally accountable for—made *subject* to—their obligations to the project and the other author-interlocutors through Critical Practice's practice of minuting. Absolutely crucial point! Aren't minutes so part and parcel of administrative process that we tend to take them for granted?

Isn't that the truth. But through the publication's depunctualisation, we begin to appreciate the significance of the minutes as the organisational equivalent to the cable ties—no minutes, no record of obligations and developments, no *PARADE* as it occurred.

Could the weekend event have happened without the minutes? Maybe. But that's not the point. The point is that the minutes offer insight into *how* it occurred *as it did*.

Are these minutes exhaustive? Is their scale 1:1? No. If we grant that total capture is impossible, we need to ask why some utterances are included here and not others. What does this absence tell us about *PARADE* and Critical Practice? What do these omissions reveal? Does the lack of agonism here—like the agonism that Brian earlier observed in the commentary on relational practices—mean there was no internal strife? Possibly. But there are other explanations. One of them concerns the accountability of the minutes to those involved. The minutes offer an account of the decision-making process and this account is also *accountable* to the decision-makers. More reciprocity.

Ding ding.

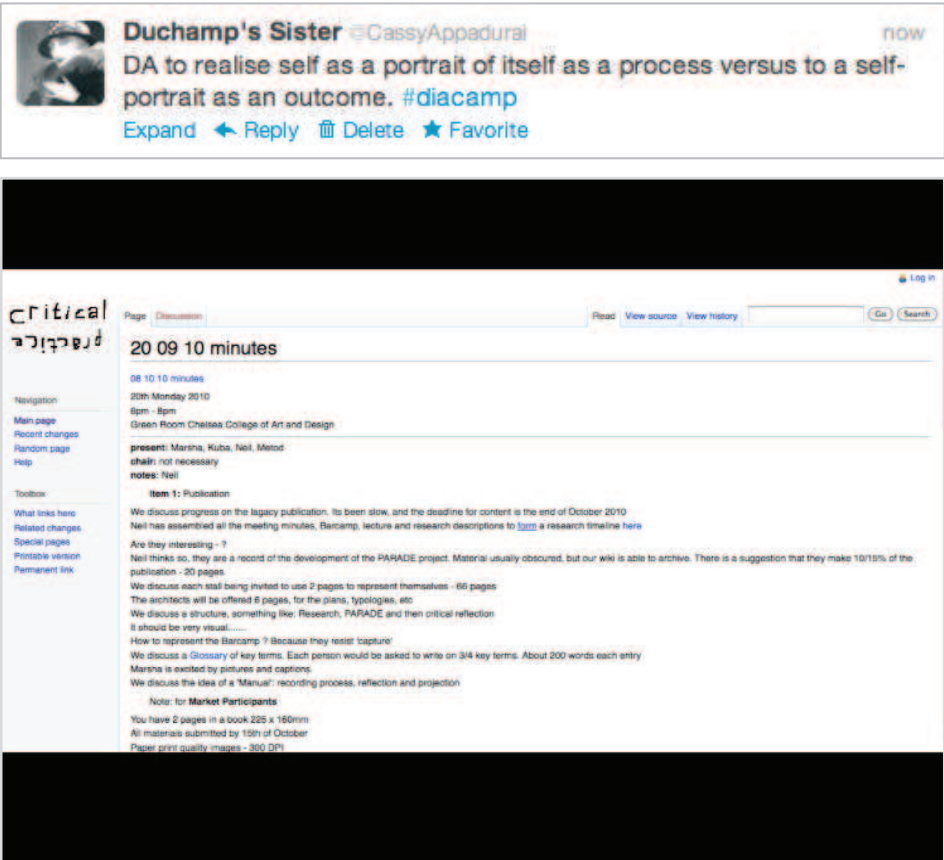


Fig. 12.16

Brian Updike:

Phil Hind:

David Rooksby:



Fig. 12.17

Phil Hind:

Yes, quite. Actually, there are three areas of accountability and they all influence each other with reciprocal effect. First, the decision makers are accountable to each other and the project, and this is inscribed in the minutes. Second, the minutes are accountable to the decision makers—they need to be an accurate representation of the decisions taken. Third, the minutes are also publically accountable in keeping with Critical Practice’s ethic of transparency—before being aggregated into the publication, they appeared on the cluster’s wiki. (Fig. 12.16) So the minutes are boundary objects. They are both organisational tools for *PARADE* and a public account of its organisational process. They trace the labour of collaboration—the labour of ‘the dialogic’. They are traces of the intersubjective utterances as the nodes in the network.

[The timer rings.]

Cassy Appadurai:

I still don’t get how the minutes are *accountable* to the decision makers above and beyond their being accurate.

Phil Hind:

But accuracy isn’t something that can be taken for granted, is it? It’s a *process of negotiation*. Clearly, decisions have been made about what is and isn’t represented in the minutes. As I’ve said, there’s not a lot of interpersonal dissent represented here. I don’t think it’s because the project was free of dissent. More likely it’s because the cluster *chose* not to represent it. Why?

The truth is, dissent is difficult to document with much *nuance*. And, you’ll recall, we observed this, for instance, in the written commentary on relational art that Brian spoke about earlier. I’m thinking of the commentators’ struggle over the artwork’s significance, a struggle that sometimes came across as a case of ‘he said, she said’. Other forms of dissent are often so complex, so dependent on context—so riven with *affect* in meetings like those depicted in the minutes—that dissent resists being rendered in some durable form that does it much justice. This is the messy organisational and political stuff that happens ‘off the page’. And it’s very easy to misrepresent dissent—as well as those doing the dissenting. And this is a second consideration—the minutes are not only making *PARADE*’s process public, but are also presenting a portrait of the cluster as an aggregate of the members involved. (Fig 12.17)

For example, the minutes tell us about the contributions of individual members, but this telling is *performed* in relation to their task at hand—that is, decision-making to move the project forward. Here’s some quantitative data. According to the *PARADE* publication, Michaela and Kuba each took minutes once, Cinzia and Neil four times, Scott five and Marsha seven. Some members never took minutes at all. What does this record of contribution tell us about Marsha, for instance? She’s a frequent minute taker, which makes good sense given that she produced *PARADE*. It stands to reason that she would take a more active role in the project’s administration. Marsha’s practice of minute taking also tells us something about her *priorities*. If we compare her minutes to others’, we note that she tends to attribute



utterances to individual decision makers more than other minutetakers do. Again, this makes sense given her declared interest in reassembling the authors’ utterances into a dialogic work of art. As the other minutetaking styles clearly indicate, many approaches are possible, but Marsha’s offers particular insight into the cluster’s intersubjective exchange through the mintues’ attribution. This occurs in a way comparable to what Maeve described earlier as ‘citation’, when the minutes *tie* the utterances *back* to the interlocutors who made them.

But, even in Marsha’s minutes, the author-interlocutors’ individual positions are rarely fleshed out. This is an important point. The minutes don’t aspire to this kind of representation because *that’s not their purpose*. *PARADE* did not embrace intersubjective exchange as an end in itself. It *explored* being ‘in public’. In keeping with this, the minutes are an administrative and organisational practice that networks the project’s obligations and interests into productive relation—the decision-making process through which *PARADE* was performed as an event and *is* performed as an account in the publication.

John Johnson: Okay—you’re saying the status of the minutes as publically disseminated ‘process documents’ explains their selectivity. Have I got that right?

Phil Hind: Yes—that is, in part. This goes back to the constitutive role of intersubjective exchange in dialogic art. It makes good sense that this is subject to the art’s task at hand and mediated by a range of heterogeneous materials. In this case, the minutes as a public record of the decision-making process map and enact the project’s concern with being ‘in public’.

John Johnson: Ding ding.

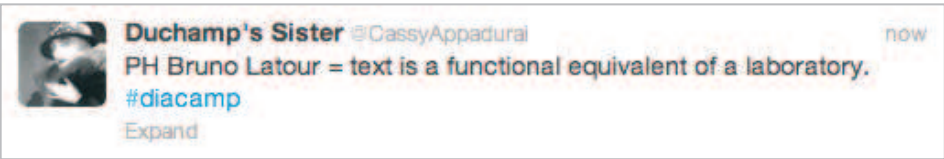
David Rooksby: Where’s the reciprocity here?

John Johnson: Okay, correct me if I’m wrong, and maybe it’s not reciprocity but I think its reflexivity—at the very least. I think what you’re saying is that the minutes are an instance of *PARADE*—its organisational process and its authors’ utterances—being ‘in public’. In other words, the minutes are *enacting* what the project aimed to *explore*.

Marsha Bradfield: I would agree with this, but I want to add something. I think there’s rough consensus in Critical Practice that the minutes represent our meetings, but other representations are surely possible. What’s important is that *some* representation gets made. They can always be amended after the fact, through our wiki’s editing function. But, in practice, they rarely are—so it was only when the publication went to print that the minutes became fixed, if you see what I mean, and they’re still theoretically dynamic on the wiki. Anyone can change them.

Phil Hind: Yes, yes, of course. But why is it important that some record gets made?

Marsha Bradfield: Well, for the reasons that you’ve already offered. Our minutes track what the cluster has accomplished as well as its immediate interests and obligations, with these shifting over the project’s development—as well as the cluster’s own development—and in response to changing circumstances.



Phil Hind: So this is the ANT argument: a dialogic artwork as a network is an effect of relations. An ANT analysis catches the strategies that produce—and are produced by—the network that’s performing them. I’ll save you the trouble, David, ‘Ding ding’. But the truth is, there’s more to this than reciprocity. The accountability inscribed on the pages of the publication intimates us with the ethos of *PARADE* and Critical Practice. These expressions tell us the cluster takes seriously its commitment to producing publically accessible accounts. Durability is important here. As Law puts it, ‘Thoughts are cheap but they don’t last long, and speech lasts very little longer’.²³ But when we perform intersubjective exchange by embodying it in texts like this publication, it has greater staying power. Law concludes that a relatively stable network is one that finds concrete expression in a range of durable materials.²⁴ And something striking about Critical Practice as a network, at least from an ANT perspective, is its resilience. It has consistently reproduced itself for eight years

Marsha Bradfield: That’s true, Phil. Every once in a while, we sense enthusiasm is waning and discuss calling it a day. And then, on cue, something happens and the cluster is reconfigured and re-energised. I attribute this, in part, to our practice of pooling resources, the longstanding commitment of certain members, the cluster’s flexibility—members can come and go—as well as our conscious effort to understand what authorship means through exploring our own self-organisation as cultural production.

Phil Hind: It makes good sense to me. Your reference to reconfiguration brings me onto *spatiality*. As I know we’re running out of time, let me conclude briefly by applying Law’s ANT-influenced thinking about spatiality to *PARADE* and considering the publication as a response to the event. It both embodies and goes beyond it.

John Johnson: Okay, so we should imagine that the iterative development of *PARADE* across event and publication is a dialogue—is that what you’re saying?

Phil Hind: Right you are. As an event, *PARADE* was spatiotemporally specific. This observation builds on the Wisemans’ discussion of vectors. Law tells us that, in this familiar kind of space—called vectored, Cartesian or Euclidean space—shapes retain their shape if a set of coordinates remains sufficiently stable, relative to each other as the shape moves through time and space. He gives the example of a ship, which remains a ship as long as the same vessel holds together as it moves across the seas.²⁵ But ANT engages with another kind of space that is good for understanding networks like *PARADE*, which are spatially *dynamic*. We can think of this as *networked spatiality*.

The *PARADE* of May 2010 no longer exists, but *PARADE* as a network hasn’t ceased. It is performed through reassemblies, including the publication and my discursive production of the network here today.



Fig. 12.18



Fig. 12.19

Now, Sociologist Bruno Latour argues that the significance of ANT as a method of description resides less with its outcomes and more with the degree to which it can *catch the network in question on the move*. He describes this kind of text as the ‘functional equivalent of laboratory’.²⁶

Ah, so we are back on the subject of laboratories?

That’s right, you mentioned laboratories in your discussion too.

Oui, with reference to John Roberts’s collective collaboration and the Bauhaus and—

Well, when it comes to ANT, descriptive texts—*accounts* as they’re called—are a space in which to experiment with ways of reassembling the network through trials, tests, simulations and other forms of analysis *as* they occur through the *text*—through its construction. When Latour says, ‘follow the actors’,²⁷ he means follow them through the text as opposed to merely describing them as something that resides beyond it. ‘A good account’, writes Latour, ‘will perform the social in the priceless sense that some of the participants in the action—through the controversial agency of the author—will be assembled in such a way that they are collected together’.²⁸ This strikes me as a good description of the *PARADE* publication as a dialogic work of art. In addition to the minutes, the documentary photographs and the plans for the structure, there is also a section where the contributors to the project self-represent through short texts that reflect on their experience of being networked into *PARADE*. (Fig. 12.19)

Phil, I’m sorry but we’re out of time.

But this is actually *interesting*.

A final few comments. When it comes to the contributors’ section in the publication, consider the following example. Bianca Elzenbaumer and Fabio Franz of Dep 21 reflect on their contribution to the *Market of Ideas*, the Sunday event composing *PARADE*. (Fig. 12.19) They describe their ‘plan for the day’ followed by ‘the result’. You can read about the specifics of Dep 21’s initiative for yourself in the slide. But it’s worth highlighting that it follows the same logic as the minutes and the project more generally, as it attempts to engage with what it means to be ‘in public’. This includes, of course, making the practice of art public in all its success and failure. In so doing, and in keeping with ANT descriptions more generally, this means the sociality of this project is *produced* as opposed to merely *represented*. The actors are, too, through their self-representation, as in the case of Dep 21’s utterance within the publication.

Great, Phil—

So, to wrap up, what implications does ANT’s descriptive approach have for dialogic art as I envision it—as a portrait of itself in process as opposed to a self-portrait as an outcome? First, it means this type of reassembly treats itself as an iteration of what it’s reassembling. As I’ve said, many other types of art trade on being discrete. But dialogic artworks contest this through depunctualising their cohesion and attempt to account for the networking



David Rooksby:
Phil Hind:

of their heterogeneous bits and pieces. In doing so, I would like to think that they aim to demystify how it is they generate a range of effects—intersubjective and all the rest. The ‘dialogic bonus’ arises through this iteration when, for instance, we note that in addition to the event of *PARADE* shaping and constituting the publication, the publication also constitutes the event after the fact.

Ding ding.
Yes, David, quite. As a process-based account of the project, it is also a co-authored expression of the cluster’s organisational *memory*. *PARADE* resides through and across its iterations as event, publication and network.

So I have presented several ideas. First, as a relational and process-based sociology, ANT offers tools for producing accounts that *enact* what they aim to *explore*. Framing, reassemblage, translation and depunctualisation are only some of ANT’s tools. Skillfully used, they provide ways of understanding dialogic art as an *achievement*—one that is reached through the co-authorship of diverse kinds of authors—as opposed to a random and otherwise inexplicable occurrence.

Second, my discussion of the minutes sought to observe their significance as *plural*. They describe *PARADE*’s material organisation—all the milk crates, cable ties, emails, people, decisions—as well as its strategies of organisation. This includes a commitment to accountability and transparency as the cluster brings these materials into relation. So when the minutes explore the character of *PARADE*, they tackle it as the interaction between the project’s material organisation as well as its strategies of organisation—which by now, it should be evident, are contingent but different. Strategies of organisation underpin the cluster’s aspirations for how their projects might come together; material organisation refers to how they are actually configured into outcomes. ANT provides tools for teasing these things apart, and we can use these tools to reach a deeper understanding of dialogic art in all its complexity and heterogeneity.

Allison, I know we’re pressed for time, but I have a final thought: Third and finally, I have said that ANT asks us to think about the heterogeneous materials that compose networks in what Law calls ‘interactional effects in contrast to primitive causes’.²⁹ I hope that by now it’s clear that ANT is a theory of both agency and complexity. It says the world is complex, but that we can better understand it through patient observation and careful analysis. ANT is valuable for dialogic art because it explores social effects, regardless of their material form, by concentrating on the question of *how*³⁰—*how* are these artworks structured and organised? *How* are they authored? *How* are utterances reassembled for artistic and sociological effect? The truth is that any approach to dialogic art that does not take technology and other non-human authors as seriously as it does human ones will never *really* be able to account for the dialogic in all its diversity. If there is one thing you

take away from this contribution, it should be that there is no question that intersubjectivity involves people, but that does not mean it’s reducible to an anthropocentric bias. That’s just good sense.

Cassy Appadurai: For the record, Phil, could you complete the statement, ‘Dialogic art is’.

Phil Hind: Well, I would put it this way: Looked at through the lens of ANT, dialogic art is a set of social relations mediated by myriad complexities. It is a range of disparate dialogues bundled together in an iterative process that attends to the reconfiguration of an *artwork-as-network* through time and space as its sociality is reassembled and discursively produced. The tasks of dialogic art, as I see it, are three-fold: to explore its own dialogues; to recognise the ways in which they reproduce and stabilise themselves; and to observe how they could and sometimes should be otherwise—and very well might be in future iterations and other dialogic works of art. Thank you very much.

Marsha Bradfield: Thank you, Phil, for proposing ANT as a method for producing dialogic art, and using *PARADE* as an example. I have many questions about ANT’s relevance for dialogic art, some of which concern the ways in which it accounts for power relations whilst at the same time keeping networks flat. But I’m afraid that further exploration of this and other ANT concerns will have to wait for our post-barcamp discussion over dinner—or be taken up and explored in future research on dialogic art. It’s now time to transition into our final session of this barcamp, where John will facilitate our discussion of guidelines for the practice of dialogic art, which we have formulated over the course of the day. We’ll discuss these in lieu of a plenary. John?

¹Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990). ‘Structuring’ and ‘structures’ are both important ideas that Bourdieu’s sociological theory and practice shares with ANT’s process-oriented sociology. And like ANT, Bourdieu’s theory is composed of a disparate set of semiotic–material tools for understanding the social as recursively practiced in contrast to given. These tools include habitus, field, capital, doxa and dispositions. Future research on dialogic art would benefit from using these tools to better understand what this practice involves and how it might evolve in line with its overarching preoccupation of exploring intersubjective exchange through the lens of dialogue theory.

²Idid., 53–65.

³Both the content and form of this barcamp contribution are indebted to John Law’s writing about ANT theory. See in particular ‘Objects, Spaces and Others,’ The Centre for Science Studies, Lancaster University, www.lancs.ac.uk/fass/sociology/papers/law-objects-spaces-others.pdf (accessed March 10, 2011) and ‘Notes on Actor Network Theory: Ordering Strategy and Heterogeneity,’ The Center for Science Studies, Lancaster University, www.lancs.ac.uk/fass/sociology/papers/law-notes-on-ant.pdf (accessed March 10, 2011).

⁴Alex Gillespie and Flora Cornish, ‘Intersubjectivity: Towards a Dialogical Analysis’, *Journal for the Theory of Social Behavior* 40, no. 1 (March 2010): 19.

⁵Law, ‘Notes on Actor Network Theory’.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Roland Barthes, ‘The Death of the Author’, in *Theories of Authorship*, ed. John Caughie (London, Boston and Henley: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981), 208–213.

¹¹Marcel Duchamp, ‘The Creative Act’ in *The Writings of Marcel Duchamp*, ed. Michel Sanouillet and Elmer Peterson (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), 140.

¹²Law, ‘Notes on Actor Network Theory: Ordering Strategy and Heterogeneity’.

¹³Cassandra S. Crawford, *Actor Network Theory*, vol. 1 of *Encyclopedia of Social Theory*, ed. George Ritzer (London: Sage, 2005), 1.

¹⁴Law, ‘Notes on Actor Network Theory: Ordering Strategy and Heterogeneity’.

¹⁵Ibid. ‘Depunctualisation’ is not usually a desirable effect because it indicates a network’s failure in some way. ‘Punctualisation’, by contrast, is ANT’s name for a network’s apparent coherence. Law describes this, and its significance, as follows: ‘Here is the connection: network patterns that are widely performed are often those that can be punctualised. This is because they are network packages—routines—that can, if precariously, be more or less taken for granted in the process of heterogeneous engineering. In other words, they can be counted as resources, resources which may come in a variety of forms: agents, devices, texts, relatively standardised sets of organisational relations, social technologies, boundary protocols, organisational forms—any or all of these. Note that the heterogeneous engineer cannot be certain that any will work as predicted. Punctualisation is always precarious. It faces resistance, and may degenerate into a failing network. On the other hand, punctualised resources offer a way of drawing quickly on the networks of the social without having to deal with endless complexity. And, to the extent that they are embodied in such ordering efforts, they are then performed, reproduced in and ramify through the networks of the social’.

¹⁶*Clement Greenberg, ‘Modernist Painting’ in *Art Theory and Criticism: An Anthology of Formalist, Avant–Garde, Contextualist and Post–modernist Thought*, ed. Sally Everett (North Carolina: McFarland, 1991), 110–118. There is a curious affinity between dialogic art’s concern with ‘showing us how it is showing us’ and Clement Greenburg’s mediumistic theory of modernist art. Greenburg explains this in ‘Modernist Painting’ as follows: ‘Each art had to determine, through its own operations and works, the effects exclusive to itself. By doing so it would, to be sure, narrow its area of competence, but at the same time it would make its possession of that area all the more certain. It quickly emerged that the unique and proper idea of competence of each art coincided with all that was unique in the nature of its medium’. Greenburg goes on to argue for a process of ‘purification’. Everything that is extraneous to an art form must be purged for the specificity of its medium to be revealed. Dialogic art and Greenburgian purification share an interest in drawing attention to an artwork’s medium: paint on a flat surface in the case of modernist painting in Greenburg’s view; the language and/or dialogues composing dialogic artworks in the case of the understandings of this art evolved through this barcamp.

¹⁷Critical Practice Research Cluster, ‘Critical Practice’, Critical Practice Chelsea, <http://www.criticalpracticechelsea.org> (accessed March 10, 2012).

¹⁸Law, ‘Notes on Actor Network Theory: Ordering Strategy and Heterogeneity’.

¹⁹Critical Practice, *PARADE*, ed. Neil Cummings (London: CCW Graduate School, 2011).

²⁰Bruno Latour, ‘On Recalling ANT’, Department of Sociology, Lancaster University, <http://www.comp.lancs.ac.uk/sociology/papers/Latour—Recalling–ANT.pdf> (accessed June 10, 2011).

²¹Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor–Network–Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005). See in particular ‘Fifth Source of Uncertainty: Writing Down Risky Accounts’, 121–140.

²²John Law, ‘Making a Mess with Method’, The Centre for Science Studies, Lancaster University, <http://www.lancs.ac.uk/fass/sociology/papers/law-making-a-mess-with-method.pdf> (accessed June 10, 2010).

²³Law, ‘Notes on Actor Network Theory: Ordering Strategy and Heterogeneity’.

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵Law, ‘Objects, Spaces and Others’.

²⁶Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor–Network Theory*, 149.

²⁷Ibid., 12. Latour might be describing the *PARADE* publication when he writes, ‘Using a slogan from 444 ANT, you have to “follow the actors themselves,” that is try to catch up with their often wild innovations in order to learn from them what the collective existence has become in their hands, which methods they have elaborated to make it fit together, which accounts could best define the new associations that they have been forced to establish’.

²⁸Ibid., 138.

²⁹Law, ‘Notes on Actor Network Theory: Ordering Strategy and Heterogeneity’.

³⁰Ibid.

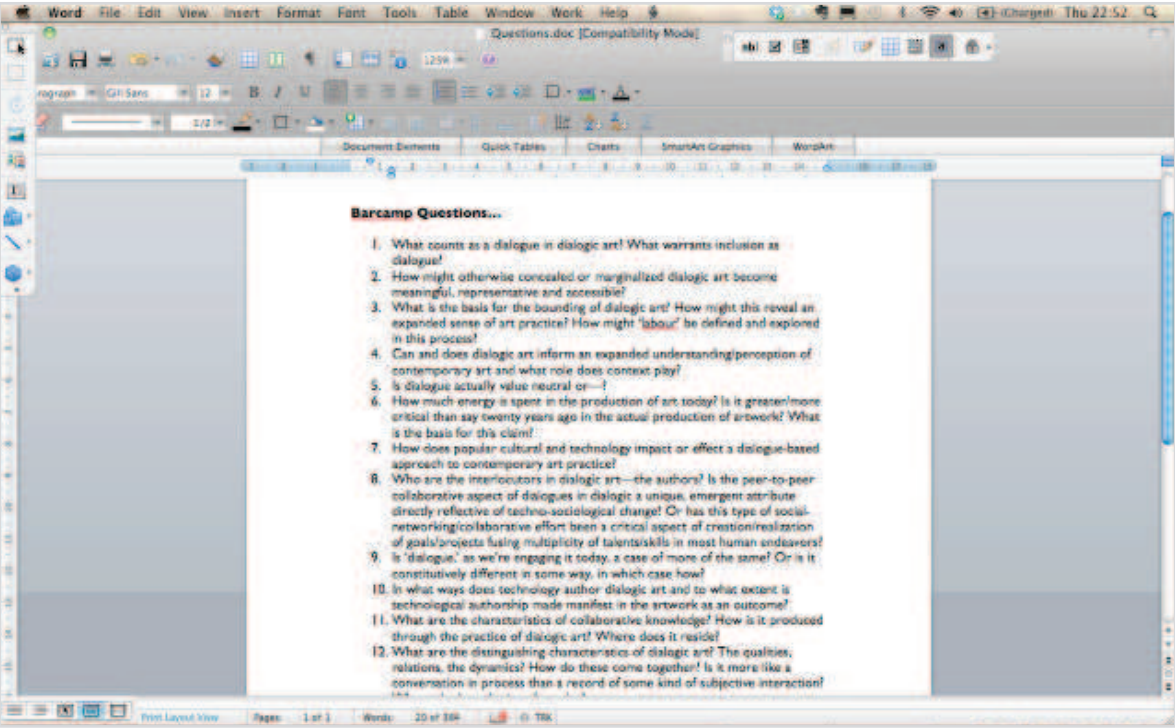


Fig. 13.0

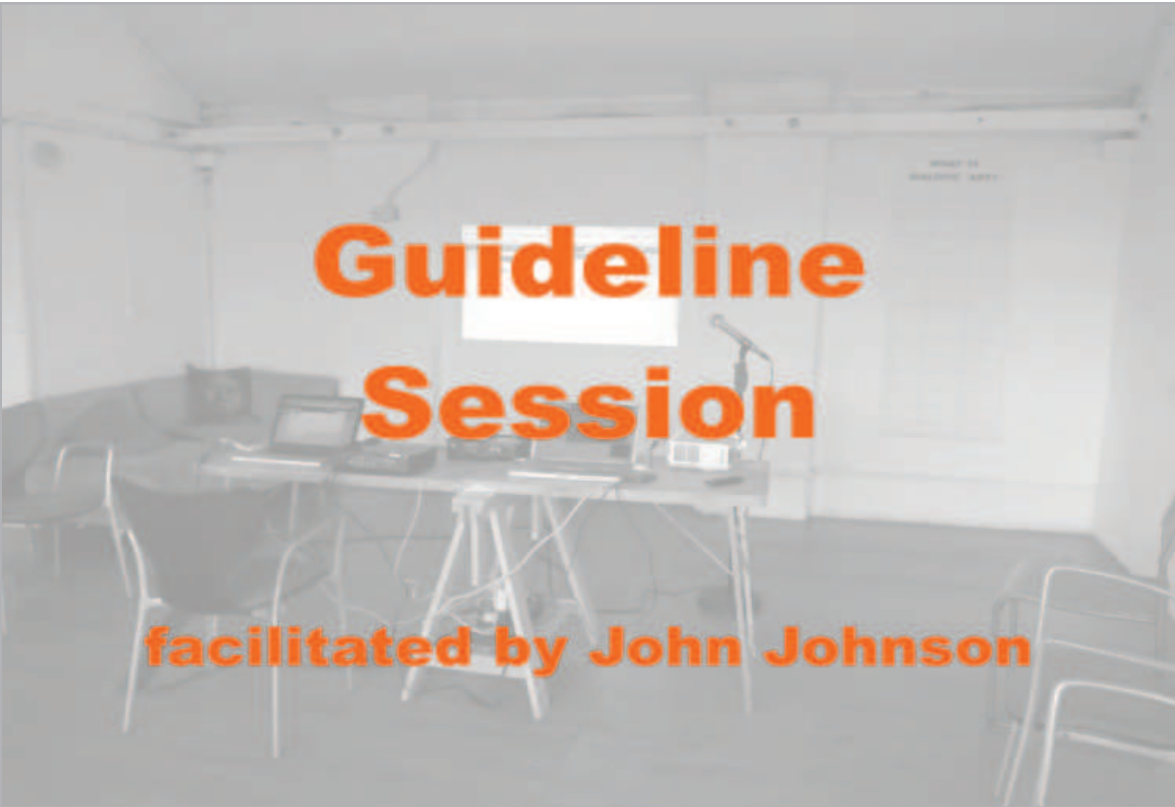


Fig. 13.1

Marsha Bradfield: John, are you going to project the questions you’ve minuted over the course of the barcamp as primers for the guideline session?

John Johnson: Yes, look, I gave up minuting them all and settled on three to five central ones from each of the twelve contributions. (Fig. 13. 0)

Okay, it has been a long day for everyone but also a generative one, to my mind. Actually, one of the most interesting aspects of this barcamp is how it’s left me *saturated* with dialogue, fully ‘dialogised’, if you will. I suppose this is an effect—or an *affect*—of this way of working, this approach to cultural production.

This morning, at the end of Marsha’s and Allison’s opening remarks, I anticipated this final session by saying that, informed by everything we’ve discussed over the course of the day, we’ll aggregate some guidelines for dialogic art. And, in a way, this is something that Maeve’s discussion keyed into with reference to authorship *qua* authorship. Together, we’ll *author* dialogic art as an approach to cultural production as we each author a guideline intent on capturing a recommendation that we, each one of us, perceives to be *indispensible* to this way of working. We’ll then sharpen the guidelines through *very* brief discussion.

I know our schedule today has been full to the point of overload, but I hope you’ve had some time think about your guideline. Look, I wouldn’t normally admit this, but as dialogic art actively draws on popular culture, and social media in particular, it is more relevant than usual—and certainly more honest—to acknowledge that I did what many would in my position. In search

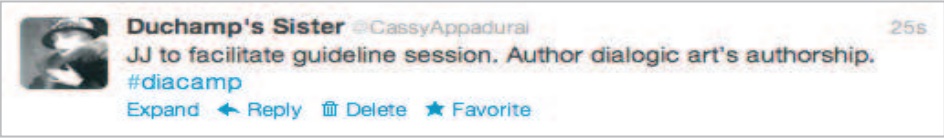




Fig. 13.2

of guidance on writing guidelines, I hit *Wikipedia*. The entry on ‘guidelines’ refers to a source that is as unlikely as it is useful. So, here we go, according to the United State’s Department of Veteran Affairs (Fig. 13.2):

A guideline is a statement by which to determine a course of action. [It] aims to streamline particular processes according to a set routine or sound practice. By definition, following a guideline is never mandatory. Guidelines are not binding and are not enforced.¹

The idea is that guidelines should provide support for accomplishing the task at hand with greater ease and effectiveness, without being prescriptive.

Okay, when it comes to the genre of guidelines, my cursory research indicates they’re often composed of two parts, a strap line and a brief statement of intent. Consider the ones posted on ‘The Free Encyclopedia that Anyone can Edit’. (Fig. 13.4) Rather than discuss *Wikipedia’s* authorial guidelines, I thought I might instead project a few as models for formulating yours.

Ella Stone:

John, a moment or two to compose our thoughts would be useful, no?

John Johnson:

Okay, we’ll pause after my brief introduction.

David Rooksby:

So this guideline session is like a barcamp—a mini barcamp—within a barcamp.

John Johnson:

Yes, that’s a good way to think about this exercise. Bear in mind that as an *aggregate* of our various points of view and respective interests in dialogic art, these guidelines may not necessarily sit next to each other with ease, free of contradiction. If earlier today I acknowledged that, to my mind, this is okay, what’s come to light through our discussion is that it’s more than okay—it’s actually *indicative* of the ‘dialogic disposition’ embodied in the barcamp’s dialogic form. Look, what has crystallised for me is a much more profound sense of what it means to inhabit and embody this polyphonic space where many voices sound and circulate without any particular one dominating or subordinating the others. Of course, in *practice* dialogic *forms*, however theoretically democratic they may be in their representation, are also messy. They fail to cohere into a nice smooth shape composed of positions that are equal in authority and significance.

Okay? The same, to my mind, applies to our guidelines. We may well agree on them in principle, but the guidelines themselves may disagree with each other, or at least complicate their respective significance through their juxtaposition.

Marsha Bradfield:

Well no, I don’t expect they’ll be uni-conclusive, any more than I expect the position they reflect, namely our shared position in this barcamp, will be either. But nor do I anticipate we’ll settle into a non-conclusive understanding of dialogic art for that matter, one where no conclusion is reached. More likely, we’ll compose something closer to a co-conclusive outcome, as something like a juxtaposition—an *aggregate*, as you say, John—of our respective points of view.²

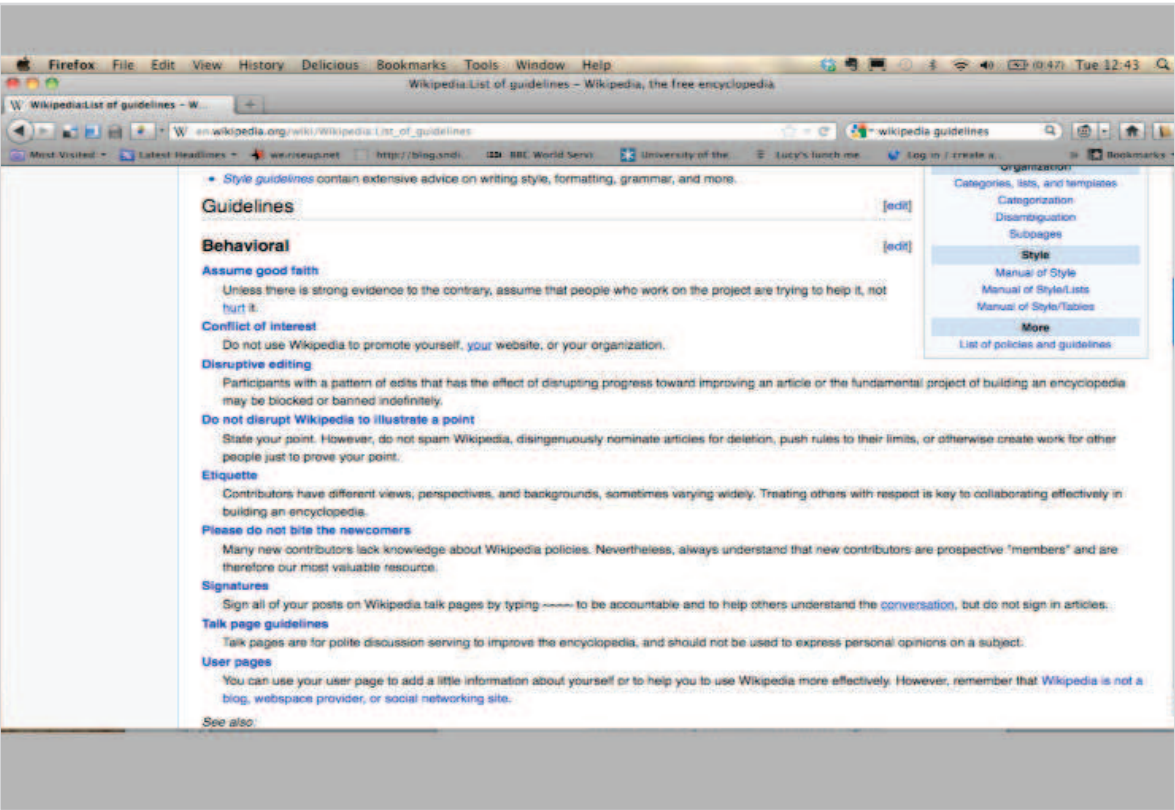


Fig. 13.3



Duchamp's Sister

@CassyAppadurai

now

BC 'conclusions' = could be uni-conclusive, co-conclusive, non-conclusive...#diacamp

Expand Reply Delete Favorite



Duchamp's Sister

@CassyAppadurai

now

Guidelines = aggregate of perspectives – embody dialogic disposition. #diacamp

Expand



Duchamp's Sister

@CassyAppadurai

4s

Boundaries of DA (and guidelines [?]) determined by their contestation. #diacamp

Expand Reply Delete Favorite

John Johnson:

Okay, but the critical point is that, as *co-conclusive*, the guidelines are an extension of our exploration over the day—or an embodiment of the barcamp’s ‘dialogic disposition’, right? The guidelines will assemble our respective views, however partial in their representation, into what we now have the language to describe as a ‘boundary object’. The guidelines will coordinate our perspectives for the purpose of circumscribing dialogic art as a practice that we may each *use*—and potentially *abuse*—as we see fit. Okay, and finally I want to say that our engagement with and application of this approach to cultural production will draw us into a loosely knit community. Look, my sense is that here, in this community of practice, the boundaries of each dialogic artwork will be determined in part *through their contestation*. And to my mind, this is one of the most crucial outcomes of our discussion today. The boundaries of these artworks will be determined as their authors’ draw and redraw them as they struggle over the artworks’ significance. And—

David Rooksby:

Enough already. Let’s get on with the show.

John Johnson:

Right. Allison? Could you set the timer for three minutes, please? I’ll shut up now and give you a little peace to collect your thoughts.

[The timer is set.]

Shadworth Dyson:

John, is there a word limit?

John Johnson:

I’ll leave that to your discretion, but brevity—and clarity—are both virtues.

Shadworth Dyson:

Yes, of course.



TheJargonBuster @TheJargonBuste1

Maybe this is a good time for us to sign off.

Expand

now

[The timer rings.]

[The timer is reset.]

John Johnson: Okay, I hope that’s given everyone enough time to reflect and articulate something that they hold to be especially important to dialogic art. I’m going to give you a minute or so to state your guideline and then I’ll reset the timer to keep us on track. Marsha? Or Allison, would you like to start?

Marsha Bradfield: Well, I can’t actually decide. I have two ideas. So perhaps I’ll raise them in relation to each other and we’ll take it from there?

David Rooksby: Very dialogic of you.

Marsha Bradfield: Something that for me came out of the day is a clear sense of dialogic art as a ‘dialogue of dialogues’, which I want to distinguish from the ‘dialogueness of dialogues’. These are tongue twisters, I know. Allison described the ‘dialogueness of dialogues’ in our opening remarks as ‘the interplay between dialogue’s social and material qualities’. Now, coming into today’s barcamp, I understood the material quality of this dialogueness as something like textuality, and I think this still applies. However, Phil has challenged me to rethink—or at least *expand* my understanding—with his emphasis on ‘the social’ aspect of dialogic art as being a constellation of heterogeneous *materials*. And at the same time, I’m fascinated by what Clark termed ‘the dialogic disposition’—and Ella’s interest in the ‘socially produced character of dialogic art being made explicit in the form of dialogic artworks’. I’m not expressing this guideline as coherently as I might. I’m really formulating it on the spot. But if we—or at least if I—plump for option number one, the tag line would be, perhaps predictably, ‘The Dialogueness of Dialogues’—Dialogic art is produced through an interplay of dialogue’s social and material qualities.



Ella Stone:

Marsha Bradfield:

[Barcamp laughs.]

Ella Stone:

Allison Jones:

Tommy Low:

[The timer rings.]

[The timer is reset.]

KK Lin:

Allison Jones:

John Johnson:

This art’s ‘dialogic disposition’ constellates these heterogeneous materials with the view of making the socially produced character of the art’s practice explicit in the form of the dialogic artworks it gives rise to’.

It’s quite long, *and* you’ve pre-empted my guideline, but I like it.

Well, then, would you like to take it as your own?

Bien sûr, merci beaucoup.

However, shouldn’t there be a guideline before this one about ‘dialogic disposition’—perhaps one that encapsulates *all* of Clark’s analytic categories. As he’s not here, may I suggest something like, ‘Concepts and Strategy’— ‘Dialogic art is distinguished by its “dialogic disposition”, which puts interlocutors in dialogue and makes this intersubjective relation conspicuous in its representational schemes. “Dialogic tactics”, like juxtaposition and nesting, underpin this art’s “dialogic strategy”, with this drawing attention to the wide range of dialogues composing dialogic art’. Could this be Clark’s guideline *in absenstia*?

Well, no. His would be about labour, surely, or at least I think—

And, um, what about the difference between ‘dialogue’ and ‘the dialogic’? I agree; it should top the list. Like Marsha, I have a couple of possible guidelines, one being, ‘The Dialogic’—‘Dialogic art takes its name from “the dialogic” and not “dialogue” *per se*. “Dialogue” is an exchange between interlocutors, with their utterances issuing across from each other. Originating in dialogue but also going beyond it, “the dialogic” manages dialogues as well as the relations between them’. Actually, ‘the dialogic’ struck me as a very generative concept, especially when we think about it being in dialogue *with* dialogue—or even *against* dialogue, with ‘the dialogic’ being dialogue’s opponent. Clark was right to point out that dialogues are protean and fertile; these are only two of many reasons why they need to be managed and— Look, I’ll take this guideline, if you have others, Allison. I think it well articulates my interest in acknowledging dialogue as occurring *within* an entity—or between its aspects—as well as between more independent entities, such as sovereign authors, who produce dialogue as intersubjective exchange. But I would prefer to say, “‘The dialogic” self-organises the dialogues composing dialogic art into relation with each other’. I know Clark emphasised ‘self-management’, but ‘management’ strikes me as so, well, *managerial*. Earlier Anne, or should I say *TheJargonBuster*, defined ‘self-organisation’ as something that occurs when aspects of something work together in such a way that no single one dominates. Look, this gets at what we were saying about the authorship of dialogic art being ‘distributed and contingent’, and in fact we determined that this could be another way to

describe ‘the dialogic’—or perhaps more specifically still, the purpose of ‘dialogic strategy’. It draws out the aspects of dialogic art as dependent on each other through their association and other relations.

Tommy Low: Excuse me but didn’t Clark say something to the effect that as far as he was concerned, dialogic art was about recognising all the *labour* that goes into the practice and realisation of contemporary art?

John Johnson: Sooo—

Tommy Low: How about ‘Dialogue at Work’—‘Dialogic artworks seek ways to acknowledge and value the range of labours enabling them.’ I hadn’t really thought about this before—the idea that artworks are *work*, or the possibility that someone’s art practice might look at the production of art from this perspective.

Phil Hind: Yes, yes, of course. This goes back to what I was saying about dialogic artworks organising all their heterogeneous materials into a network.

[The timer rings.]

Tommy Low: I don’t mean to go on but, what about the idea of including all the dialogues—all the *labour*—that’s often *othered*, I mean that’s so often *denied* in the artwork as a cohesive expression—an expression that denies the terms and conditions of its own becoming. Or at least I think that dialogic art may, could maybe, work *harder* to acknowledge *more* of this work, this labour? Within reason, of course.

Allison Jones: Of course we may run the risk of *infinite regress* or *infinite progress*—or both. But surely this is something that needs to be worked out on a case-by-case basis.

Marsha Bradfield: Well, I sense it’s a risk that dialogic art has to run if it is to engage authorship *qua* authorship as a practice that is, well, that acknowledges cultural production as—dispersed.

Maeve Cutty: Well, then, luv, doesn’t this relate to the theory of the work or a theory of *art practice*? So could we roll this in too? ‘Dialogic art is a theory of art practice that seeks to acknowledge and value the diverse and disparate labours that compose dialogic artworks’.

Tommy Low: Yeah, I could go along with that. Could that be my guideline?

John Johnson: Certainly, and it seems that for the first time today we’re ahead of schedule, with four guidelines down and thirteen to go.

David Rooksby: Well, we’re all too knackered to put up much of a fight. We may not have exhausted dialogic art, but it has exhausted *us*.

[Barcamp laughs.]

John Johnson: Okay, so far we have Ella’s guideline, Clark’s, Tommy’s and mine. Marsha what was your second guideline option?

[The timer is reset.]

Marsha Bradfield: Like my thoughts about the ‘dialogueness of dialogue’ in dialogic art, I’m not sure I’ve yet fully articulated this second possible guideline to myself either. But it concerns the ‘dialogue of dialogues’. I was thinking the strap line might

be ‘A Dialogue of Dialogues’ and the statement of intent would go something like, ‘By recognising dialogue as a constitutive and heterogeneous practice, we can begin to account for the dialogues in dialogic works of art, with these occurring between interlocutors and composing registers of exchange, while also playing a constitutive role in the art’s overall significance’.

Anne Lang: Well, it’s quite long, that one.

Marsha Bradfield: Yes, I know. But we can boil it down in due course. After all, this is only the first iteration.

Phil Hind: Yes, quite. In a way, Marsha, that incorporates my proposed guideline. It makes good sense to me to acknowledge that, when it comes to the *range* of dialogues composing dialogic art, they occur *between* human and non-human actors. So I should like to suggest a tweak, if I may, Marsha. Could we place ‘between human and non-human actors’ after ‘a diverse range of dialogues’?

Anne Lang: It’s already quite, you know, wordy. What about this: ‘A Dialogue of Dialogues’ — ‘Dialogue is a generative and multifarious practice composed of dialogues. Here intersubjective exchange often occurs through non-human interlocutors. The dialogues in dialogic art play a constitutive role in the art’s practice, composition and significance’. And as this is quite a high-level proposition, I think it should go near the end of the list.

Phil Hind: On second thought, I think we should separate the idea of non-human actors from the ‘dialogue of dialogues’, and give them their own guideline. My suggestion for the strap line is, ‘Human and non-human interlocutors’. So—

Maeve Cutty: What about a guideline dedicated to interlocutors more generally as *authors* instead of ‘actors’. This could then trail dialogic art as concerned with authorship *qua* authorship. So it could go something like, ‘Authors and Authorship *qua* Authorship’ [more tongue twisters]— ‘By acknowledging the various authors of dialogic art, we gain insight into *who* and *what* authors this art as well as how it comes into being. This is part of dialogic art’s broader exploration into authorship *qua* authorship of cultural production’.

Brian Updike: Absolutely. But I would add ‘over the course of its iterative development’ — ‘*who* and *what* authors this art as well as how it comes into being over the course of its iterative development’.

Phil Hind: Yes, yes, of course, Brian, but don’t you think the development of dialogic works of art is something *else* that warrants its own guideline? A guideline that observes dialogic artworks as evolving over time and space in tandem with the dialogues they constellate—or, more accurately, *through* the dialogues they constellate?

Marsha Bradfield: Well, for me, this gets at the idea of dialogic art being an ongoing ‘project’ that is alive to the ways in which it evolves *reflexively*, as it bends back on itself and informs its own becoming.

[The timer rings.]

[The timer is reset.]

Brian Updike: No doubt. But, in addition to bending back, dialogic art also *spreads*, as it makes what is immanent to itself, namely *dialogue*, immanent to the terms

of its own expansion. I mean, I can absolutely imagine dialogic art evolving its own approach to commentary as an extension of its artistic practice, and I can see this commentary being composed of a literal dialogue between say, Kester, Bishop and Bourriaud—and dialogic artists, including Marsha, as well as other interlocutors, second-order authors, for example. The idea would be that this commentary would itself bring them all together, on the same page. And this genre of commentary would be characterised by its own polyphony, its own particular way of organising the relations among its dialogic aspects and interlocutors. So what about something as simple as, ‘Expansion and Iteration’—‘Dialogic art spreads in time and space’.

Phil Hind. Yes, yes, of course I know what you mean, Brian. At least, I think I know what you’re getting at—but I don’t know how I would follow this as a guideline. Could we expand and iterate what you’re proposing, in the reflexive spirit of the guideline’s recommendation, but saying that, ‘Dialogic artworks evolve through iterations, with the practice of dialogic art networking their heterogeneous materials (dialogues, histories, interlocutors, etcetera) and expressions (practice, artwork, reflective commentary, etcetera) across their production, distribution and reception’.

Brian Updike: Absolutely brilliant. Or at least in light of our time constraints, it does the job as an initial iteration.

Marsha Bradfield: For sure, all the guidelines will need to be polished and compressed.

KK Lin: May I just say that your mention of dialogic commentary with regards to genre reminds me that we never really settled on what the medium of dialogic art is? Sorry to bring this up so late in the day.

Marsha Bradfield: If I remember correctly, both Shadworth and David felt this was *language*, with David taking the view that dialogue is the *form* of dialogic art, which accords with my interest in dialogic forms as being predisposed to representing a range of authorial relations.

David Rooksby: Well in a way, that comes onto my guideline, which trades on reciprocal relations. ‘Reciprocal Relations’ that’s the strap line, and I’m thinking the body could go something like this, ‘Reciprocal relations organise dialogic art, and bring into relation things that affect each other in ways that are mutual without being symmetrical’.

Allison Jones: ‘Things’? What about ‘entities’.

[The timer rings.]

[The timer is reset.]

Tina Wiseman: This is quite close to Krista’s guideline. She had to collect our granddaughter from a play day and so left it with us to read out on her behalf. ‘Affect’— ‘Being aware of the affect enveloping art practice makes us more sensitive to how we mutually influence one another’s experience and understanding through the transference of our emotional and bodily states’.

Phil Hind: Yes, Tina, I think that’s important. But I wanted to say something about David’s guideline before moving on. I’m surprised, David, that you didn’t choose boundary objects.

David Rooksby: Thought about it. Both should have guidelines, for sure. Does anyone want boundary objects?

Cassy Appadurai: Actually, that was my pick. My offer goes something like, ‘Boundary Objects’—‘Dialogic art and practice are boundary objects that coordinate communities of practice through an ongoing process of commitment and negotiation’.

Shadworth Dyson: Yes, well, it strikes me as crucial that we encapsulate the idea of *threshold* somewhere in these guidelines, and you come close to this here, Cassy. It occurs to me, however, that ‘negotiation’ may already *imply* ‘commitment’, making the use of the word ‘commitment’ redundant, and if there’s some way to lodge *contestation* in there—or perhaps heteroglossia, which entails the struggle of positions, voices and languages—we should try to do so. Perhaps something like ‘Dialogic art and practice are boundary objects. They bring heteroglot communities together that thrive on struggle and—

Allison Jones: Struggle? Doesn’t that *essentialise* dialogic art as, you know, *agonistic*. I mean, haven’t *we struggled* throughout this barcamp to move beyond an essentialist understanding of dialogue—as linguistic exchange or otherwise? Though I would sort of agree that agonism is a condition of dialogue—and so is cooperation, really.

Ella Stone: *Oui, mais*, does agonism not imply *cooperation*? Is it not organised in so far as it brings authors, interlocutors and opponents into relation? But actually what I was going to say, and this is of course, what’s the expression, my ‘hobbyhorse’, I was going to say that ‘collaboration’, understood in its most basic sense as ‘working together’, seems to catch a sense of *engagement* that could be useful here. So may I suggest, Cassy, that your contribution might read, ‘Boundary Objects’—‘Dialogic art and practice are boundary objects that engage author-agents through an ongoing process of collaboration that seeks to understand the terms of its own possibility’.

Cassy Appadurai: Yes, that’s *good*. Thank you, Ella. The last bit concerned with possibility seems to tap into the important question of what it means to collaborate in dialogic art by acknowledging that it’s actively taking shape through this art’s ongoing practice. Thank you very much. Or should I say, *merci!*

[The timer rings.]

[The timer is reset.]

Tina Wiseman: Ella, be to sure I understood you correctly, you said that, ‘Dialogic art and practice are boundary objects that engage *author-agents* through an ongoing process of collaboration’, yes? That’s what you said? Alright then, I’m not quite sure about, ‘author-as-agent’? What are the terms of their *agency*? And why not foreground the *artist* as a coordinator and collator of the dialogues composing dialogic art? Christian and I were thinking about

this when formulating our guideline. It attempts to acknowledge that, in addition to producing artworks, dialogic art also produces *subjects*. So our guideline reads ‘The Responsive Subject’—‘Subjectivity in dialogic art resides with intersubjectivity, understood as an ethical relation marked by ongoing negotiation. Artist-agents *author* and are reciprocally *authored* through their artistic practice, in a responsive process. These artist-agents are *individual* rather than *independent*, with their individuality taking shape through their subjectivation in dialogic art—through its myriad dialogues—embedded in their broader life experience and practice’.

John Johnson: That’s quite a long guideline.

Tina Wiseman: Well, there is only one between us.

John Johnson: Okay, that means we’ll have sixteen instead of seventeen.

David Rooksby: Sounds good to me. Next.

Marsha Bradfield: I know we’re all eager to bring this barcamp to a close but this point that dialogic art produces *subjects* in addition to artworks strikes me as a central pivot—perhaps even *the* central pivot here.

Shadworth Dyson: Yes, well complementing the Wisemans’ guideline and your comments, Allison, is the idea that both first and second-order authors in dialogic art *author* the art, each other and their understanding through their utterances as thresholds across self and other. I expect it will come as no surprise that my draft guideline reads: ‘Utterance Literacy’—‘Dialogic Art is authored through and composed of its authors’ utterances, who use utterance literacy as a skill set for drawing out the utterance’s import as the building block of dialogic art. This literacy taps into communication as a threshold between self and other, and this is inscribed in their intersubjective exchange’.

[The timer rings.]

David Rooksby: Next.

[The timer is reset.]

Hillary Murphy: I am hoping my guideline indicates the epistemology of dialogic art as an approach to co-constructing understanding. Sooo... ‘Dialogic Epistemology’—‘Anchored in dialogic epistemology, the way of knowing proposed by dialogic art is co-constructed. Through intersubjective exchange, subjects call into question their understanding, recompose it as knowledge in common and share it rather than treating it as coextensive among them’. What do you think?

Marsha Bradfield: Yes, that’s quite good. ‘Calling into question’ gets at Stephen Scrivener’s sense that a function of art is to raise apprehensions.³ At the same time, your emphasis on co-constructing knowing in dialogic art may also acknowledge *literal* dialogue in the form of intersubjective exchange as constitutive of dialogic artworks and practice in contrast to being something that they prompt on the occasion of their encounter as—

Ella Stone: Why don’t we just say, *fait accompli*!

KK Lin: Um, this mention of ‘literal dialogues’ and ‘calling something into question’ anticipates my guideline. Do you recall that I approached dialogic art from

the perspective of spatial relations? I was challenged to rethink this, in light of Marsha and Allison holding fast to dialogue as intersubjective exchange as a point of departure for their research and hence our broader discussion. So, um, speculating how *figurative dialogues* might serve to re-present the literal dialogues that constitute dialogic art became especially interesting—I think, in part, because perhaps it’s something that could distinguish this from other dialogue-based forms of contemporary art practice. So I’m thinking my guideline might be, ‘Literal and Figurative Dialogues’—‘Dialogic works of art take as their referent literal instances of intersubjective exchange. People interact with objects, networks, information and/or each other to produce these works of art. But figurative dialogues may also feature and highlight that the artworks produced through this exchange reassemble the authors’ utterances into a subsequent dialogue’. I know this isn’t quite right—not fully resolved—but what I hope is that it suggests some of the issues we wrestled with earlier. Do you think with a bit of editing, it might be able to insist on dialogic art’s innovation of mimetic schemes that, you know, acknowledge and explore the complexity of what we called ‘the ethics of opacity’ in our discussion?

Marsha Bradfield: As a first iteration, KK, that’s excellent.

John Johnson: So who is still outstanding?

Anne Lang: That would be me. What’s missing from our list is a guideline that acknowledges the point that John made earlier about *bounding* dialogic works of art—I mean, I think it’s an important point and really shouldn’t be missed. So, you know, if John doesn’t mind, I mean if I’m not overstepping here as this was really his observation, this guideline would read, ‘Boundaries’—‘The boundaries of dialogic works of art are determined by their contestation’.

John Johnson: I can go along with that.

Brian Updike: And what’s implicit here is the idea that, through this contestation, one becomes part of the community or network of practice—however briefly. Yes, well, all right, I suppose I’m up next. Well, mine may be a little opaque to those unfamiliar with how I’ve elaborated this idea here today, but I would say ‘Portraiture’—‘Each dialogic artwork aspires to be a portrait of itself as process, as opposed to a self-portrait of itself as an outcome’.

David Rooksby: Nice one, Phil—short and sweet. Allison, it looks like you’ll have the last word here.

Allison Jones: Well, firstly, I’d like to review our research rationales, with these being subsumed under our broader conviction that dialogue remains an under-theorised yet nevertheless vitally constitutive aspect of contemporary art, in dialogue-based art practices and beyond. Very briefly—

John Johnson: Okay, but I’m afraid we won’t have time to discuss how we’ve explored them throughout the discussion, Allison.

David Rooksby: And nor do we need to because—because we’ve been discussing them for close to *twelve hours*.

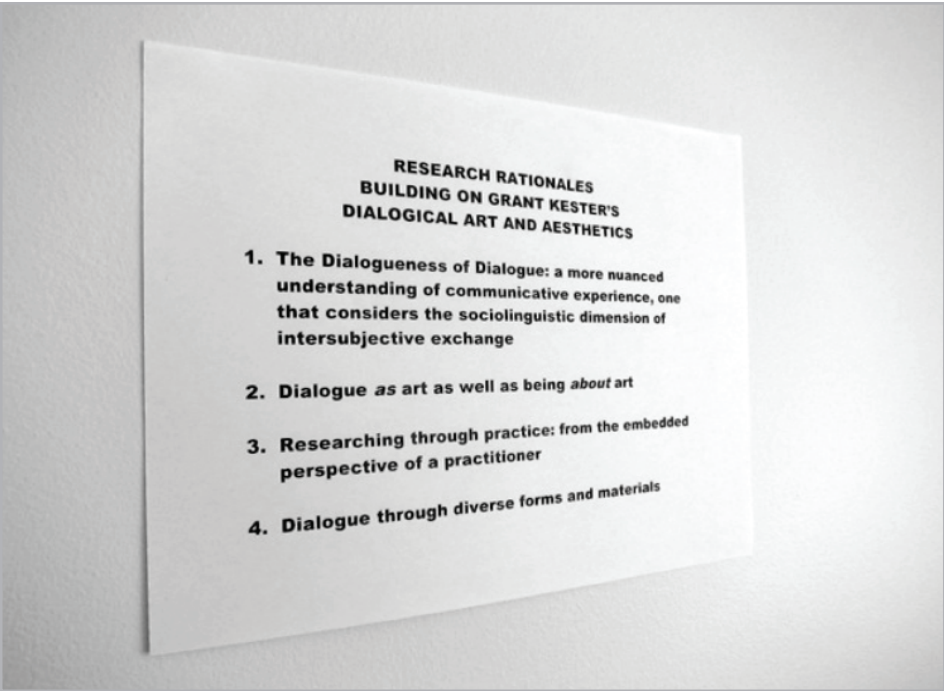


Fig. 13.4

Allison Jones: Well, very briefly and to bookend today’s discussion, our research rationales are as follows (Fig. 13.4): (1.) To develop a more nuanced understanding of communicative experience by exploring the ‘dialogueness of dialogue’.

Shadworth Dyson: Yes, well, both Ella’s and guidelines concern this.

Allison Jones: (2.) To examine about dialogue *as* art as well as being *about* art, while at the same time exploring dialogic art as a process of communication in contrast to a physical object.

David Rooksby: Done and dusted. I can’t think of a better example of dialogic art practice than this barcamp—an interactive event rather than an object.

Allison Jones: (3.) To research dialogue from the perspective of a practitioner directly involved in the art practice. Actually, this is where my proposed guideline comes into it, but I’ll come back to it following all the rationales. (4.) To investigate dialogue through diverse forms and materials. The idea here is to get beyond dialogue as either verbal exchange or intersubjective exchange—in order to acknowledge the ways in which intersubjective exchange is always mediated.

Phil Hind: Yes, yes, of course. I believe we made moves towards acknowledging a *wider* range of dialogues composing dialogic art, subject to further expansion and complication in good time.

Allison Jones: (5.) There is one final rationale, and it’s to understand dialogic art as a constitutive practice, with the methodology motoring this approach and bringing into relation sensibilities and resources drawn from disciplines beyond fine art.

David Rooksby: If the barcamp’s composition and the range of demos offered today don’t point to what a ‘constitutive practice’ might involve, I can’t imagine what would.

John Johnson: Okay. Allison, would you like to give us your guideline now?

Allison Jones: Yes. ‘Researching Through Practice’ — ‘This practice-based approach locates the practitioner in relation to their authorship as distributed and contingent. The research evolves from this position but it also aims to account for the dialogues composing it’.

Anne Lang: You know, I’d just like to request one point of clarification, Allison. Is it the ‘researcher’ who’s distributed and contingent, their ‘authorship’ or both? I mean, it’s a little unclear.

David Rooksby: Where have you *been*, Anne? *Both*, of course! If I had a pound for every time I heard the phrase ‘and/also’, I’d be able to buy everyone drinks in the pub!

John Johnson: Okay. A round at the pub on David, it is. Speaking of which—

Marsha Bradfield: Right, John. Well I’m sorry this barcamp has come to a close and that it goes so rushed at the end. But, on behalf of Allison and myself, of course, I would like to thank you all so much for being here today as co-researchers into dialogic art. I hope very much that you’ll remain part of this community of practice, this network, this ongoing conversation. For sure, your contributions have evolved our sense of what this art *is* and *could* be, as well as opened up important areas for future research.

Allison Jones: Thank you all so much for being part of ‘What is dialogic art?’

John Johnson: Marsha, the guidelines?

Marsha Bradfield: Oh yes, when it comes to transcribing the barcamp, I’ll begin with the guideline session. I’ll email the list of the guidelines through as soon as they’re collated. Feedback is welcome, of course.

John Johnson: Thank you, Marsha and Allison. Can we have one more round of applause, please?

[Barcamp claps.]

Marsha Bradfield: Allison, could you stop the recorder, please? Thank you. Thanks so much.

¹Wikipedia contributors, ‘Guidelines’ Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, <http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Plagiarism&oldid=5139350> (accessed March 10, 2012). <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guidelines>. Referenced here is ‘ONE-VA Technical Reference Model, Glossary,’ United States Department of Veterans Affairs <http://www.va.gov/trm/TRMGlossaryPage.asp>, (accessed March 10, 2012).

²Stephen Scrivener, email message to author, April 11, 2012. Herein, Scrivener proposed uni-conclusive, co-conclusive and non-conclusive as three forms that understanding generated through dialogic exchange might take.

³Stephen Scrivener, ‘The Art Object Does Not Embody a Form of Stephen Scrivener,’ *Working Papers in Art and Design* 2 (2002) http://sitem.herts.ac.uk/artdes_research/papers/wpades/vol2/scrivener.html (accessed May 19, 2011).

19:56

GUIDELINES FOR DIALOGIC ART

474	John’s Guideline:	‘The Dialogic’—‘Dialogic art takes its name from “the dialogic” and not “dialogue” per se. “Dialogue” is an exchange between interlocutors, with their utterances issuing across from each other. Originating in dialogue but also going beyond it, “the dialogic” self-organises dialogues as well as the relations between them’.
	Clark’s Guideline:	‘Concepts and Strategy’—‘Dialogic art is distinguished by its “dialogic disposition”. It puts interlocutors in dialogue and makes this intersubjective relation conspicuous in its representational schemes. “Dialogic tactics”, like juxtaposition and nesting, underpin this art’s “dialogic strategy”, with this drawing attention to the wide range of dialogues composing dialogic art’.
	Brian’s Guideline:	‘Expansion and Iteration’—‘Dialogic artworks evolve through iterations, with the practice of dialogic art networking their heterogeneous materials (dialogues, histories, interlocutors, etcetera) and expressions (practice, artwork, reflective commentary, etcetera) across their production, distribution and reception’.
	Shadworth’s Guideline:	‘Utterance Literacy’ — ‘Dialogic Art is authored through and composed of its authors’ utterances, who use utterance literacy as a skill set for drawing out the utterance’s import as the building block of dialogic art. This literacy taps into communication as a threshold between self and other, and this is inscribed in their intersubjective exchange’.
	Cassy’s Guideline:	‘Boundary Objects’—‘Dialogic art and practice are boundary objects that engage author-agents through an ongoing process of collaboration that seeks to understand the terms of its own possibility’.
	Anne’s Guideline:	‘Boundaries’—‘The boundaries of dialogic works of art are determined by their contestation’.
	KK’s Guideline:	‘Literal and Figurative Dialogues’—‘Dialogic works of art take as their referent literal instances of intersubjective exchange. People interact with objects, networks, information and/or each other to produce these works of art. But figurative dialogues may also feature and highlight the ways in which the artworks produced through this exchange reassemble the authors’ utterances into a subsequent dialogue’.

Phil’s Guideline:	‘Portraiture’—‘Each dialogic artwork aspires to be a portrait of itself as a process, as opposed to a self-portrait of as an outcome’.
Tommy’s Guideline:	‘Dialogue at Work’—‘Dialogic art is a theory of art practice that seeks to acknowledge and value the diverse and disparate labours that compose dialogic artworks’.
Maeve’s Guideline:	‘Authors and Authorship <i>qua</i> Authorship’—‘By acknowledging the various authors of dialogic art, we gain insight into who and what authors this art as well as how it comes into being. This is part of dialogic art’s broader exploration into the authorship <i>qua</i> authorship of cultural production’.
Allison’s Guideline:	‘Researching Through Practice’—‘This practice-based approach locates the practitioner in relation to their authorship as distributed and contingent. The research evolves from this position but it also aims to account for the various dialogues composing it’.
The Wisemans’ Guideline:	‘The Responsive Subject’—‘Subjectivity in dialogic art resides with intersubjectivity, understood as an ethical relation marked by ongoing negotiation. Artist-agents author and are reciprocally authored through their artistic practice, in a responsive process. These artist-agents are individual rather than independent, with their individuality taking shape through their subjectivation in dialogic art—through its myriad dialogues—embedded in the artist-agents’ broader life experience and practice’.
Krista’s Guideline:	‘Affect’—‘Being aware of the affect enveloping art practice makes us more sensitive to how we mutually influence one another’s experience and understanding through the transference of our emotional and bodily states’.
David’s Guideline:	‘Reciprocal Relations’ — ‘Reciprocal relations organise dialogic art, and bring into relation entities that impact each other in ways that are mutual without being symmetrical’.
Hillary’s Guideline:	‘Dialogic Epistemology’ — ‘Anchored in dialogic epistemology, the way of knowing proposed by dialogic art is co-constructed. Through this intersubjective exchange, subjects call into question their understanding, recompose it as knowledge in common and share it, rather than treating it as coextensive among them’.

Marsha’s Guideline:

‘A Dialogue of Dialogues’—‘Dialogue is a generative and multifarious practice composed of dialogues. Here intersubjective exchange often occurs through non-human interlocutors. The dialogues in dialogic art play a constitutive role in the art’s practice, composition and significance’.

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APPENDICES

TWITTER LIVE-FEED INSTRUCTIONS
for
‘What is dialogic art?’ barcamp

- There are two ways to contribute to the Twitter live-feed:
1. Use your own handle, in which case you know what to do.
 2. Tweet anonymously under ‘DialogicArt’ by going to <https://twitter.com>
sign in as whatisdialogicart@gmail.com
password: [dialogue123](#)
start tweeting!

Please use the hashtag #diacamp for all tweets—this is a code that you’ll place at the beginning of your tweet to make it easier to search online, in Twitter and beyond. Visit hashtag.org for more information.



- A few types of tweets:
1. Status update—observation or comment about what’s going on in your world.
 2. Ask a question regarding the barcamp’s content.
 3. Respond to a previous tweet.
 4. Make a comment regarding the barcamp’s content.
 5. Include a citation or reference of relevance—links are good.

In addition to ‘DialogicArt’, you’ll also notice someone tweeting as ‘Duchamp’s Sister’. This is Cassandra Appadurai, one of our two barcamp reporters. While Cassy will ‘narrate’ the barcamp, Anne Lang will define terms that strike her as obscure or specialized, under the handle ‘TheJargonBuster’.

THE CONTRIBUTORS



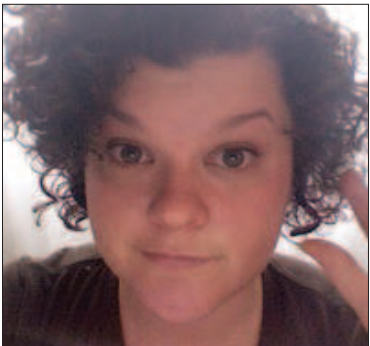
Anne Lang is a PhD student at Chelsea College of Art & Design. Her research concerns the discursive production of art, through both written and oral expression.

Anne contributed to the barcamp by tweeting. As *TheJargonBuster*, she defined obscure words raised in the barcamp’s discussion.



Allison Jones is a critic, curator and art historian. Currently based at Chelsea College of Art & Design (University of the Arts London), she is collaborating with artist Marsha Bradfield on a practice-based PhD in dialogic art. Through her research, Allison is developing a conceptual framework for understanding this art. She is also interested in art research as an extra-disciplinary knowledge enterprise.

Allison co-organised the barcamp and co-presented the welcome address. Here she focused on the event’s research rationales as an outgrowth of her and Marsha’s collaborative research.



Cassandra Appadurai is an art journalist and writer based in London.

Tweeting under the handle of *Duchamp’s Sister*, Cassy microblogged ‘What is dialogic art?’, sharing the event with interlocutors online.



Clark Chris has been blending an eclectic mix of skills and sensibilities to create a unique symbolism in his art practice since his emergence in the late 1990s. His art explores ‘the self in art as a way of life’, concentrating on the personal psychology of art making. For Clark, the artist’s media is unimportant. It is his capacity to inspire a response that counts. Often using banal objects, materials and forms to surprising effect, Clark’s artworks eschew conventions of ‘good taste’ to explore the intimacies of diverse systems of value.

For this barcamp, Clark gave a PechaKucha on ‘the dialogic’. Described as a non-narrative fable, this contribution speculated that ‘the dialogic’ stems from, but also goes beyond, dialogue. It resides with dialogue but also acts as a counter force with the aim of making dialogue more productive. With this in mind, Clark proposed a set of analytic categories for understanding dialogic art and exploring the conditions of its self-organisation.



Brian Updike is a California-born writer based in London. He freelances as a curator and art critic, contributing to wide-ranging international publications. Updike also co-edits *Assume the Position* with Ella Stone. This new magazine examines art and/as writing.

In their joint contribution, Ella and Brian approached dialogic art through the lens of collaboration. Brian focused on the interplay between art commentary and art practice, suggesting that in the case of relational art, they may be extensions of each other. This occurs when what is immanent to the art practice becomes immanent to its commentary and vice versa.



David Rooksby was trained as a designer but today works in advertising. Describing his current practice as ‘dynamic and resourceful’, it ranges across print, new media and social networking. David lives in Brighton with Chris Throp and their three children.

David approached dialogic art as a resource. He pitched three advertising campaigns inspired by the barcamp discussion. This opened discussion on dialogic art and practice as ‘boundary objects’, shaped through cooperation and contestation among their stakeholders.



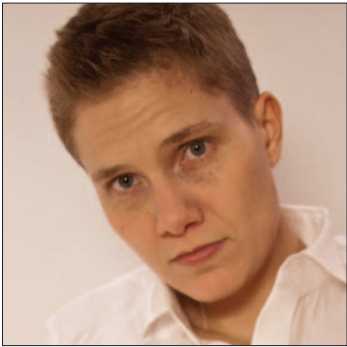
Ella Stone is the lead curator for HiT International’s contemporary art collection. Currently based in London, she joined HiT in 2007 from Tate, where she had worked since 2000. Stone’s interest in contemporary art began when she visited the Museum of Modern Art whilst studying anthropology at la Sorbonne. Inspired by indigenous forms of community art, she read non-western art history and criticism, and today works as a curator and writer and has a strong interest in emergent art practices characterized by social engagement. Stone also co-edits *Assume the Position*, a new magazine that investigates art and/as writing, with her partner in work and life, Brian Updike.

For this barcamp, Ella and Brian approached dialogic art through the lens of collaboration. Ella focused on ‘collective collaboration’ as collectivised practice for making the socially engaged character of the artwork’s production manifest in its artwork outcomes. Ella’s reference to Sophie Calle’s *Take Care of Yourself* sparked heated discussion about what distinguishes a collaborative approach in relation to participation, collectivity and other organisational modes.



John Johnson is a London-based artist, curator and educator. Describing himself as a ‘generalist’, his art practice spreads across diverse media and concerns, which he constellates through his long-term interest in self-organisation, self-governance and other ways of approaching group or shared practice.

In addition to being the barcamp’s designated *agent provocateur*, John facilitated the final session. Here the contributors consolidated their day-long exchange by proposing guidelines for the ongoing development of dialogic art.



Krista Wiseman is an artist, educator, curator and activist.

For ‘What is dialogic art?’ Krista offered reflections on the affective registers of intersubjective exchange. Drawing on the barcamp as an example, she noted the subtle (and not so subtle ways) that emotion and volition spreads through dialogue amongst interlocutors.



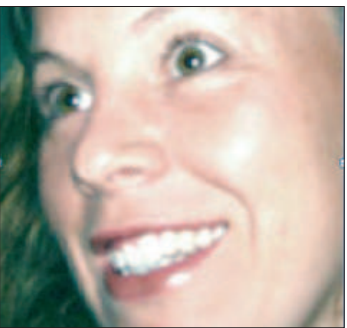
KK Lin’s photo-based practice examines our relationship to the built environment. In her intricately constructed photo installations, she explores art as an immersive experience arising from spatial relations. Her current work investigates urban construction sites in areas of regeneration.

KK’s contribution concentrated on Pierre Huyghe’s *Chantier Barbès-Rochecouart*, provoking discussion about types of dialogue. This helped to flush out a specific concern in dialogic art with dialogue as intersubjective exchange, in contrast to figurative or metaphorical dialogue.



Hillary Murphy is an art educator currently based in London. She studied fine art as an undergraduate at the Accademia di Belle Arti di Firenze and completed an MA in education at Essex University. Her areas of specialization include process-based practice, informal education and peer-to-peer exchange.

Hillary proposed dialogic epistemology for understanding the significance produced in dialogic art and practice. This prompted discussion on social constructivism as similarly concerned with co-constructing knowledge.



Marsha Bradfield is presently pursuing a PhD at Chelsea College of Art & Design (University of the Arts London) in collaboration with Allison Jones. Her recent research explores dialogic art as a dialogue-based contemporary art practice that aims to understand dialogue in an expanded sense. Previously, Marsha worked in Critical + Cultural Studies at Emily Carr University, Vancouver, Canada and studied Chinese art and Mandarin in Taipei, Taiwan. She has also worked in collaboration with Critical Practice, Precarious Workers Brigade, Future Reflections and Contemporary Marxism Collective.

In addition to organising and co-facilitating ‘What is dialogic art?’ and collating documentation of the barcamp, Marsha co-presented the welcome address with Allison Jones. Marsha observed the influence of popular culture on dialogic art, via trends including social networking and unconferences like this barcamp.



Maeve Cutty is an educator, writer, artist and researcher. Maeve investigates the authorship of new cultural forms, exploring the intersection of voice and textuality. She has a PhD in Cultural History from the University of Edinburgh through which she examined the role played by fonts in written expressions of autobiography.

In this barcamp, Maeve proposed authorship qua authorship as a central concern for dialogic art. While offering a partial defense of the author’s authorial agency, she considered the complex web of authorial relations through which ‘the authored’ is realized as such.



Phil Hind is trans-disciplinary in inclination. Part sociologist and part methodologist, Phil has worked with artists, writers, architects, designers, teachers, engineers, medical practitioners, lawmakers and business people. Day-to-day experience is trans-disciplinary and it demands practices that are sensitive to material heterogeneity, spanning ‘natural’, social, cultural, economic, human and technological aspects. Phil says he’s ‘fascinated and horrified by complexity and think we need flexible but also robust ways of studying how things interrelate.’ That’s why he works with Actor Network Theory (ANT) and other sociological approaches in an attempt to catch social processes and understand their contingencies. These approaches come together in a growing toolkit, something closer to a heterogeneous bunch of methods (definitely not a cohesive theory!) for mapping systems and experience. Phil again: ‘I’m also preoccupied with the performativity of method, which is to say how methods produce—via often surprising and conflicted ways—the phenomena they are describing’. Phil’s current research project considers the performative dynamics of social protest in the UK in response to the recent economic downturn. He lectures at UTTQ and TTU and runs The Center for Distributed Studies and Services.

In this barcamp, Phil used ANT to explore *PARADE*, a research project concerned with being ‘in public’ that was realised in 2010 by Critical Practice Research Cluster based at Chelsea College of Art and Design. Phil proposed ANT as a methodological toolkit for tracking the networks that support dialogic art’s dispersed authorship.



Professor **Shadworth Dyson** is the author of numerous publications on sociolinguistics and pragmatics. His current research interest is social dialectology (an approach to language change and development) especially within speech communities. This includes populist hobby groups, where enthusiasts of different backgrounds come together in assemblages cutting across age, class, gender and ethnicity. Professor Dyson is currently working on his third ESSRC-funded research project on the discursive features of artists in London, taking account of this cultural context’s massive diversity.

For ‘What is dialogic art?’ Professor Dyson proposed ‘utterance literacy’, informed by Mikhail Bakhtin’s meta-linguistics, as a skill set for practitioners of dialogic art.



Tina and Christian Wiseman have been working together since 1972 when they met as students whilst studying photography at Kunstakademie, Düsseldorf. Their subjects often emerge from living and working with other artists. Supporting and facilitating the art practices of others, they say, ‘is central to our own’.

In the barcamp, Tina and Christian discussed subjectivity and authorship with reference to Emmanuel Lévinas’s and Mikhail Bakhtin’s ethical perspectives. In response to the question, ‘What, in addition to art, is produced through artistic practice?’ the Wisemans proposed the ‘responsive subject’. This subject emerges through an ongoing process of utterance and response as they understand their creative production as composed of diverse relations between self and other.



Tommy Low is currently interning in advertising and enjoys fishing and snowboarding in his spare time.

For the barcamp, Tommy created three advertising campaigns aimed at branding dialogic art. They were pitched by David Rooksby.

THE CHOSEN

curated by
Georgia Lucas-Going
with the help of Marsha Bradfield

Background: Last summer, emerging artists from across London and beyond became eight finalists in Art Idol 2010. They gathered in a former ironworks in North London for a one-day event to decide which one of them should win £300.00, an exhibition and the title of Art Idol 2010.

The artists shared their portfolios, they gave and received feedback, they pitched their exhibition proposals, they voted and were voted off. Marsha Bradfield, the artist-organizer, may have fostered the process and documented the reality-TV style event. But it was the eight finalists who selected one of their own as Art Idol 2010.

The pros and cons soon multiplied, spinning a confusing web of cause and effect. The nail-biting final produced an outcome that could not have been predicted in advance: a group exhibition curated by winner Georgia Lucas-Going.

The Exhibition: *The Chosen* explores choice and choosing, selecting and being selected. Lucas-Going was chosen as Art Idol 2011 by her peers. In an act of reciprocity, she chose an artwork by each of them for exhibition. Luck, struggle, preference, negotiation, persuasion, compromise and knock-on effects: These are only some of the dynamics that shaped Lucas-Going's picks. Her method of selecting the artworks was neither linear nor logical in a conventional sense. Her objective has instead been to make the best choices possible under the circumstances. *The Chosen* invites us to imagine the countless considerations—all the invisible labour(s)—that brought this exhibition into being but are largely effaced in its outcome.

Press release by Marsha Bradfield with help from Simon Fuek

Sharon Bennett
Marsha Bradfield
Ting-Ting Cheng
Leo Cohen
Steven Cook
Simon Fuek
Helene Kazan
Paul Kindersley
Georgia Lucas-Going

Performances:

August 11th, 2011: 1 – 3 pm

A live actor will engage the props comprising Paul Kindersley's *Performance*.

August 10th/18th, 2011:

sometime between 7 – 12 pm

Witness Simon Watt reveal the imagined truth and veritable fiction within the life and recent suicide of his alternate personality Mr s fuek.

Closing Party:

August 18th, 2011: 7 – 12 pm

Exhibition runs:

August 10th – 18th, 2011

The Red Gallery
3 Rivington Street
London EC2A 3DT
12 – 6

"The Chosen," meaning ... me. I know it sounds really cocky but it isn't because I was chosen. It's not me thinking, "Oh yeah! I am 'The Chosen'". I was chosen."

—Georgia Lucas-Going

Through her collaborative practice, Sharon Bennett acts as a facilitator, creating opportunities for the artist, collaborators and audience to dialogue with each other and with the work. By encouraging the sharing of knowledge from generation to generation and across peer groups, Bennett explores and enhances the relationships around her alongside notions of generosity, the Everyday and pedagogy.

sharonbennettcontact@gmail.com

Marsha Bradfield's research-based practice explores the diverse value(s) produced as people interact with information, objects and/or each other. This social exchange, often face-to-face, is documented and these traces reconfigured into installations that map filigrees of interdependence. Across text, objects, video and photography, Bradfield grapples with the infinite complexities of cause and effect to eek out agency and develop tactics for coping with the meaning(lessness) of life.

She also works in collaboration with Critical Practice and the Precarious Workers Brigade.

marshabradfield@gmail.com

Ting-Ting Cheng was born in Taiwan and graduated with an MA in Photographic Studies from University of Westminster, London. She has exhibited and received a number of photography awards internationally, including ones from New York, London, Berlin and Taipei. By combining objects, images, text and voice, she explores the concept of foreignness from different perspectives. Being an outsider is a very important part of Cheng's practice. Her works are in private collections worldwide.

ting@chengtingting.com

Leo Cohen is a cross-disciplinary artist working in sculpture, temporary installations and drawing. He plumbs philosophy, politics, history, fantasy and tradition to investigate complicated socio-cultural issues. For Cohen, art is a space for conjuring up complex experience to dramatic effect. Creating atmospheric environments that are charged and challenging is one of his central concerns.

leo@theleocohen.com

Steven Cook is an artist who works with digital media and photography. His series of work ALTERNITY manifests possible pasts in mendacious but startlingly believable photographic images. These alternate narratives are strangely familiar, yet have a sense of disquiet, as histories collide and memories blur. Anticipating Cook's recent work, Roy Voss observed in 1908 that Cook's photographs suggest things aren't always what they seem. The past is maybe not what we thought it was.

steve.cook@virgin.net

[Transcription of a conversation with Simon Watt interrupted by YouTube Lautrec]

Mr s fuek was the founder ing of Ualism. An form in which the concept(ion) or idea(l) involved in the visual presentation of a design and/or mood take aesthetic as well as material concerns... He was an criticist. Meaning a person whose practice entails their pretending to be an artist. *Double espresso s'il vous plait*. Paintings, artifacts, words, made-readies, reActions and an unceasing performance *kard pour kard*. Poo-it. Nomenclator. Solipsist. Jejuxum...

uicismons@hotmail.com

Helene Kazan's practice uses bastardised architectural processes to create situation-sensitive interventions that investigate notions of territory, occupancy, space and cultural growth. Across diverse media, she explores interactions among space, light and materiality in physical surrounds, drawing out emotional responses that are often unexpected. She is currently developing techniques to understand spatialized experience through animation and new media.

helenekazan@me.com

Fan, icon, auteur, glamour, celebrity, stereotype: Paul Kindersley's art practice spotlights film as the projection between viewer and screen. His image-based installations are often uncanny as they transgress dualisms like fantasy/reality and the personal/public, highlighting filmic experience as mythologized—an heroic overcoming. At the same time, banal cultural encounters serve Kindersley as a storehouse of props with which to populate a reality that is striving to make sense of the everyday.

paulkindersley@hotmail.com

Georgia Lucas-Going animates found objects to speculate about their secret histories. Her sculptures and installations bring together visual puns and wordplay, highlighting the surrealistic side of life. Lucas-Going takes inspiration from lived experience. Chatting with friends, her hometown of Luton, the smell of musty upholstery in her studio/garage are some of the sources informing her practice.

georgia.georgiageorgia@yahoo.co.uk

With special thanks to:

The Red Gallery for providing the venue, especially Ernesto Leal, Yada Krampol and Alana Hartin

Material bookstore for help with publicity

Lucy Gibson for designing the digital flyer

Jonny Finch for documenting the exhibition and his ongoing moral support

Natalie Hyde for two days of volunteer help

Greg Conready for 'tech-ing' tirelessly.

All our friends, family and supporters—without you this exhibition would not have been possible

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Some artists seem able to work along steadily with little succor or success. That isn't my way. I need to know that others believe that 'my' practice has promise. At no time is this more important than when I lose faith in it myself, and I've often doubted the direction of 'my' research over the long development of this thesis. Thankfully, I've been surrounded by supporters whose unwavering encouragement has sustained me when I needed it most.

They have backed me through many failures without holding them against me, challenged me to think more deeply and honestly with greater clarity, and fostered in me a healthy appetite for risk; they have championed my cause in boardrooms, seminar rooms and dining rooms, and in doing so taught me how to argue my case; they have nudged me into laughing more, worrying less and trusting in my voice; they have taught me to value personal and community well-being. As a result, I have accrued many debts (emotional, artistic and, yes, financial) over the long and, at times, difficult gestation of this PhD. I can acknowledge only a few of them here.

Above all, I thank my supervisors. My director of studies, Professor Neil Cummings, has been inspirational and insightful in equal measure. I am indebted to his enthusiasm, concern, support and, especially, his patience. His artistic sensibility and visionary ambition are things I can only aspire to. Neil has not only anchored 'my' investigation but also the research culture of the University of the Arts London. Professor Stephen Scrivener has also been invaluable in this regard. Like Neil, he has fostered a generation of artist-researchers by way of resourceful example. I am grateful to Stephen for his extreme kindness and thoughtful advice, both of which far exceeded what I ever deserved. I also owe a deep debt to Dr. Mary Anne Francis. Her generous commentary on my early drafts stretched my writing and thinking in multifarious ways, as did our probing discussions. Her practice has also influenced this research, with reference to Mary Anne's PhD thesis made frequently in this one. To Dr. Hayley Newman, I am grateful for unofficial supervision via mentoring and friendship. Similarly, I would like to acknowledge Dr. Malcolm Quinn's enthusiasm for my research. And I appreciate Dr. Matthew Rowe's help with thinking through issues related to art theory that had ensnared me for years.

I am also extremely thankful to the University of the Arts London for awarding me a studentship and substantial project funding. This has enabled me to invest in Critical Practice Research Cluster, Future Reflections Research Group, The Practice Exchange, the Csepel Project, Creative Transition, The Contemporary Marxist Group and other UAL research initiatives. I owe a terrific debt of gratitude to my cohorts: Katrine Hjelde for her friendship and gentle care; Aaron McPeake for his indomitable spirit, quick wit and

political acumen; Ana Laura Lopez de la Torre for being so smart and sassy; Scott Schwager for his big-heartedness; and Charlotte Webb for her incision and curiosity. I am also thankful to Lucy May Tomlins at the Royal College of Art, and Gael Willow James in remote time zones for their bonhomie talks deep into the night. And I would like to acknowledge my comrades in the Precarious Workers Brigade, far too many to mention here by name but all of them inspirational.

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If PhD theses are always co-authored because they build on a heritage and (hopefully) address a community of practice by contributing 'new' knowledge, the situation is slightly different in this research. Though it is true I've committed the better part of half a decade to developing dialogic art as a particular approach to dialogue-based contemporary art

practice, it has truly been a collaborative effort every step of the way. I trust this explains why I’ve placed ‘my’ practice, investigation and research in inverted commas above. I trust also that the polyphony of authorial voices composing this thesis indicates the dynamic matrix in which it was produced. It is important, I think, that a project about dialogic art should acknowledge at least some of the diverse dialogues through which it comes into being. For sure, this ambition propelled this PhD research.

